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**JANUARY, 1950**

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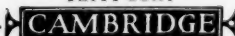
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VOL. XI, NO. 1

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## *Music at the University*

BY

A. E. F. DICKINSON

THE conduct of university music invites criticism at the present time. In many cases it is too limited for present needs and these limitations betray a foundation of obsolete educational hypothesis. There are strange differences of syllabus, not easily paralleled in other cultural subjects, between one university and another. One caters for specialists (of a sort), another for the educated and well-informed listener, a third compromises. There are the somewhat elusive distinctions of Bachelor of Music, Honours Bachelor of Music, music as a principal or subsidiary subject for Honours B.A., and music as a subject for the general degree of B.A. There are examinations with and without internal teaching, with and without residence. It may be surmised that behind these various courses there sometimes lie provocatively different educational aims. In the way of informal but organized music, there are the apparently conflicting claims of choral and orchestral societies, gramophone lecture-recitals, general lectures, and concerts. Above all, one can discern and not discern an awareness of wider educational objectives. Such confusion and contradiction of purpose calls for inquiry. Where an unusual and surprising accommodation is based on verified and recent experience, it needs no justification. But sometimes it is from sheer lack of up-to-date scrutiny. There is a serious danger that a too conservative and narrow outlook may defeat the educational chances of the (musically) new middle class which is now issuing from the secondary schools and loud-speaker with some sense of personal significance but often with unrealized potentialities. On this widening public will depend the growth of a musical society worthy of the more equal cultural opportunities of young people, on the one hand, and, on the other, worthy of whatever art the time-spirit may produce. It may even be asked whether the direction of the specially gifted is in all cases well considered and adaptable enough. The purpose of the present essay is not to criticize this and that syllabus or institution, still less to advertise a particular curriculum, but rather to ventilate with a breath of extra-mural or at least unofficial comment the educational atmosphere in which courses are arranged and carried out.

We may begin with the more special courses. They are of the longest standing, and on them many general courses are framed. The usual Bachelor's course in music comprises harmony, counterpoint, fugue and sometimes canon as such, history and sometimes acoustics, and free composition on broadly specified lines. It is commonly stated that this course was originally designed as a training for cathedral organists. The general objective is evidently, first, an understanding of certain musical styles, from the sixteenth century



onwards, sufficiently thorough to be shown in the reproduction of these styles in an examination; secondly, a wider application of technical methods of the writer's own choice in extended composition; thirdly, some knowledge of music as a history and possibly as a part of science. It may now be asked what type of music student is served by such a course, and from what current schooling he may be expected to qualify for it.

As already suggested, the first obvious candidate is the student with creative leanings. Two features of his training call for notice:

- (1) token composition in what is broadly sixteenth-, eighteenth- or nineteenth-century style, in some cases in the style of Palestrina, Bach and other individual composers, with a rigid insistence on personal detail;
- (2) emphasis on contrapuntal methods of writing.

As regards the first, writing in a closely imitative manner has certain uses. It involves the cultivation of one style rather than none, and the mastery of the difficulties or limitations which the grammar of that style may on analysis be shown to contain; for example, the writing of harmony solely from common chords and their first inversions, with suspensions, is at least steady. But the sedulous reproduction of a composer's mannerisms is almost pointless. Particularly questionable is the bookish observance of all the melodic and contrapuntal practices, half of them avoidances rather than positive movement, by which Palestrina achieved his blameless devotional style. Further, such imitation may be admissible at the intermediate stage, at which development of true and vocal part-writing *per se* is needed, but students should surely be getting beyond this period-study in their second year, if they are at all fitted for this course of elementary composition. *A fortiori*, the pursuit of period in studied elaboration (eight-part counterpoint and all that) is a strange exercise for candidates for a doctorate! Manifestly writing in eight parts is more difficult than writing in four, or at least it takes more time to find eight lines to express the general harmony that is in mind, but this juggling with niceties of grammar and texture rather reminds me of a little old man whom I recently saw playing Diabolo brilliantly on the beach. Diabolo is devilishly difficult for a long time, but as an exercise in muscular control it has none of the wider possibilities of tennis.

We come to the second point. From two to eight parts, from chorale to fugue, the accent is on counterpoint and its scope of concentrated expression in a small space. It is implied that the contrapuntal is the good, the best product of sound learning, to which its patently intellectual element in canon and fugue bears witness. The general course of English oratorio and, one may suspect, of the B.Mus. and D.Mus. fugues from which those imposing choruses took their leaden flight (the notorious fugue on "And his name was Boaz" is commonly quoted as the nadir of this grotesque process) should warn the inquirer what impotence fugue can induce or conceal. Further, the whole assumption that fugue is a tremendously learned pursuit, involving procedures which only experienced counsel can pronounce to be right or wrong, is misleading. There are a number of dainty devices by which fugue-subjects



and episodes have constantly been varied in presentation. But in Bach's fugues these devices are often conspicuously absent or incidental, and Bach's whole treatment of fugue is that of a rhetorician, not of a professor of the traditional sort. Moreover, even Bach often used fugue as no more than an incidental way of enhancing his expression. Most composers have used fugue incidentally or not at all. They have cultivated instead the scarcely less intellectual and no less rhetorical structures of symphony, concerto and music-drama; with what fusion of dashing momentary sensation and deliberate, cumulative relationship, the Viennese aristocracy were able to appreciate, and after them the middle classes of many lands. It would be rash to say that a concerto of Mozart's maturity or a sonata of Beethoven's was less the product of wise or superb craftsmanship, a less signal example of the sort of ground worth covering at all costs, than a Bach fugue or a Palestrina motet. Yet with nearly all this extended horizontal music the general composition paper of examinations appears to be out of tune. By wide academic consent any practical understanding of these wider structures, analogous with that of the contrapuntal ones, is not to be insisted upon, except in so far as the final exercise calls for a knowledge of classical models.

It will now be clear in what sense such a course points to the training of the cathedral organist-composer—that is, of the organist at a cathedral whose establishment of daily choral services calls for short pregnant anthems and canticles in which an alert polyphony is a constant resort. However this may be, the prevailing concentration on contrapuntal exercises in a mainly imitative style is educationally suspect. It seems to have been decided upon because of its convenience to examiner and candidate. It can all be packed into two or three papers; "the style of Palestrina" is a reasonably cut and dried test; and unless a candidate has the pluck to emulate Bach by producing a fugue from sheer contrapuntal energy and episodic inventiveness, it is easy to see whether he has made crafty use of his *data*. As training for a composer, then, such a course is very limited and almost superfluous, and, in fact, not many English composers of note have gone to a university for their further training. This argument should not be pressed, for in the past it has been a matter of considerable additional expense. To-day, when all university gates are opened much wider than ever before, it will be interesting to see whether there is a change of direction away from the music colleges and coaches and towards the universities.

These composition exercises, and the papers to which they lead, are crowned by a considerable, partly instrumental composition, the examination of which constitutes the last stage of the music degree. Its purpose is obvious, and it avoids the disadvantages at which the three-hour tests place the slow but perhaps more critical worker. All this is balanced by some history papers. In the past, and possibly at present in certain examining coteries, there has been a deplorable tendency to treat history perfunctorily, as a matter of names, dates, works and movements, associated by some mysterious schedule and memorized almost without opening a single score; with a correspondingly lenient attitude to those whose memories for such paper qualities are

unorganized. To-day there appears to be a more serious view and a much sounder insistence on first-hand experience, beginning with the prescription of scores. Two features may be noted: there is very rarely any demand for a *critical* knowledge of twentieth-century composers, or of earlier questionable composers such as Marenzio, Arne, Holzbauer, Spohr. The request is for information rather than for judicial matter, and a student is not often expected to give decisions in those many interesting cases where the verdict of history is uncertain or scarcely yet pronounced, still less to quash the traditional dogma surrounding the great composers. This is to be regretted, as it promotes an irresponsible frame of mind.

Acoustics concerns performance on its scientific side. It has its obvious value as an educational study, but it should be optional for musicians. It is scarcely science. Score-reading at the piano figures in a number of syllabuses. It appears to be a good test of the higher sight-reading without which a student is dependent on orchestral performance. A *viva voce* examination, besides being a convenient way of mobilizing information on prescribed scores, is an obvious opportunity for discovering whether a candidate has a cultivated mind and ear, apart from a capacity to walk circumspectly, or is just hunting for a diploma. But one hears incredible stories about the frivolous character of certain *viva* ceremonies.

Performance (or conducting) constitutes one alternative for the third year (the other alternatives being composition or a thesis) in at least one course. This appears to be a strange compromise between university and conservatoire music, the spread of which would leave B.Mus. highly ambiguous; but it may make an interesting type of musician, and we need these experiments, if only as "control".

This Bachelor of Music course thus comprises a large element of language-study, including a working use of various mainly contrapuntal styles, and a variable element of literary, critical and scientific study. Is it a course suitable for critics, whether writers, teachers or supervisors? I doubt it. Grappling with the problems of composition, even in a set style, sheds some insight on the preparatory experience and final achievements of accomplished composers, and incidentally prepares a conductor-director for the business of arranging or concocting "occasional" music. But the refinements of creative imitation do not make a critic. On this point Professor Piston is refreshingly blunt. In his *Harmony* and *Counterpoint* he declares that the loving study of what *has* been written is no criterion how it should be written in the future. Nor is a critic's armoury sharpened much by non-committal surveys of works and periods. It is unfortunate that at certain universities musicians of critical standing but no creative aptitude have to attempt such a course from the lack of any other accommodation. It is also unfortunate that amongst educational executives, and even more in wider social circles, a Bachelor of Music passes as a man of authority, judgment and learning. (The pressure which heads of secondary and even of junior schools sometimes exercise in this matter, on the simple formula that a specialist degree looks better on a prospectus, is iniquitous. The attitude of university selection committees might also be

questioned on the same score.) A B.Mus. *may* be an oracle, but he need not be. Conversely, I could name able critics who have failed or never sought to gain a musical degree; one is an authority on Bartók. Let us burn our boats. The *B.Mus.* is for the dull composer of critical sympathies. It is too pernickety for the talented composer and too narrow for the general musician. In some cases its prestige rests partly on the high percentage of failures. The capacity to pluck is a matter of social security and bluff: it is no *guarantee* of high educational stamina.

The technical starting-point of the Bachelor course is, however, very advanced in relation to prevailing school standards, that is, to what is commonly taught in any secondary school class. It is usually conditioned by private coaching. Thus only a small minority of the musical enthusiasts who now come from the schools can consider it. However, there it is, and it still remains for those who have to coach students for it to devise as educational a method as possible. Something may be said on this topic.

There are two ways of mastering a given style. One is to study examples, the other is to assimilate the generalizations of critics on points of grammar and manner. The teacher's business is in the first place to name examples, including some which stretch the harmony of their period to an unusual point of freedom in the way of passing notes, unresolved discords and even a fresh harmonic norm. In the sixteenth century the scarcity of two-part examples is an initial difficulty that is not always recognized. In the eighteenth, the Bach *Inventions* and *Suites* are at once handy. Many teachers will need to supplement their oral coaching by published textbooks. Most of these are to be rejected. They begin with elementary guidance and go on, not to study instances of a more idiomatic usage and abuse, but to give arbitrary instructions which confuse applied common-sense with mealy-mouthed "It is better not to" exhortations. The most established variety of this type of primer is the compendium of scholastic counterpoint, that pseudo-grammarians treasure of unnecessary and inexplicable rules, invented in many cases for rule's sake, not legitimately inferred from strict classical precedent.

What is necessary is a book which shall represent grammar (in the words of Dr. Otto Jespersen)

"not as a set of stiff dogmatic precepts, according to which some things are correct and others absolutely wrong, but as something living and developing, under continual fluctuations and undulations, something that is founded on the past and prepares for the future".

In the sixteenth century, R. O. Morris' in every sense historical study, *Contrapuntal technique of the sixteenth century*, will put the student on the right track and will prove a useful fund of reference, but numerous as are the examples there, for one book, more are often needed for the elucidation of possible variations of idiom, and there is a neglect of the special harmonic trenchancies of Weelkes and others. In any case, it is to be hoped that whatever grammatical authority is consulted—Alan Bush is the last in the

field, as I write—the student will learn just enough to divest himself of his eighteenth-nineteenth century technique and then try to write something somehow; *after* which he can look up points or consult his tutor. Composing by book is sure to miss any feeling of spontaneity and is downright stultifying. Especially stultifying is the 10-bar exercise (or shorter). A student who does not find this cramping had better throw in his hand and admit that the sixteenth century has no experience he can make his own. It is sometimes said that it is *essential* to go through a sixteenth-century course to acquire freedom from the tyranny of the bar-line. That freedom is certainly needful, but there is more than one way of acquiring it.

For eighteenth-century counterpoint Morris' *Introduction to Counterpoint* may be a useful gymnastic, but there are no classic illustrations to guide the tyro. Piston's *Counterpoint* fills the gap, avoids the common neglect of melodic structure, and shows many connections in the period 1700–1900. For the more chromatic style, and for the various pursuits of it in the nineteenth century, the student will have to rely on his teacher; a few gaps are filled by Piston's *Harmony*, but any scholarly tutor will work out his own course of harmonic curiosity. Incidentally, it is permissible to plead for a more realistic attitude to groups of octaves or fifths in two given parts. Octaves are always audible and weaken the weave; they are less audible in the richer textures. Fifths are not always audible, or in other words two do not necessarily make a group, nor are they necessarily weakening. They must be considered on their own merits and in their own context. *A fortiori*, mere similar motion to fifths or octaves must be considered as it comes. It is very difficult to tie Bach down to any procedure.

Fugue, as a process of which Bach alone has written so many examples that some types at least can be codified, has been much expounded in terms of answer, episode, *stretto* and the other traditional devices. The last in the field, Dr. Oldroyd, has examined freshly a good many of Bach's procedures in the *Forty-eight*, and he has devised a plastic formula for a short fugue on any subject, to be written in three hours. But Bach himself did not begin with short, pithy, ingenious fugues. He let himself go in exuberant fugues of 100 to 200 bars—namely, the organ fugues—in only two or three of which did he resort to the tricky combinations which most examiners appear to relish. The result was that when he compressed his fugal momentum into 100 bars and under, he rarely used any device except to intensify an already live cross-rhythm, often for the barest moment. There is a distinct need to reconsider the approach to fugue, in my estimate. (I have endeavoured to shed a little light on Bach's fugal art in a series of articles in *The Monthly Musical Record* from September, 1948, onwards.) Counterpoint at the tenth and twelfth and all that should be practised, but the first thing is to develop the will to write continuously in fugue, as Beethoven did. The next thing is to realize that ingenuity and episode may fail. Bach often failed at both points before he acquired a surer touch. He did not succeed by finding a formula but by letting each context prompt the next in a resourceful balance of relevance and digression. To regard close canon as inevitable is absurd.

All this may be a terrible grind for what may be a talented composer of *opera buffa*. It is the tutor's special task to broaden such a student's outlook and at the same time to convey that "as good as Palestrina" can only be a preliminary stage of self-development, still more "as safe as Palestrina".

Here we approach the terminus of supervised composition. But the gulf between this array of mainly contrapuntal incidents and the developed symphonic structures which should at least be kept in mind as models of self-sufficient expression, must be spanned sooner or later, if only for the sake of the final free composition, not excluding the choral cantata which so often suffers from a lack of musical backbone. Scholarship in the structural field is a serious need and should be brought up to date. The symphony itself, for example, has gone through several phases of classical maturity and revival, "romantic" experiment and entirely fresh processes of interlocking movements and thematic development. The symphonic poem and the choral symphony have had a history. The past cannot be ignored. Then there is harmonic texture, another spicy tale which will challenge the serious tutor.

Does it matter where the tutor is found? Let us admit that after school-time further educational effort *may* be conducted at home, mobilised by university authority and then tested more or less impersonally in the various university examinations available. But it must also be admitted that a university is a society of men and women interested in the imponderables, led by those who have avoided or forsaken both the mixed appeal of business and the scarcely less equivocal aspects which a career of public service involves, whether in a newspaper, a broadcasting station, an education department or a school. These, not unduly disturbed from fixed standards of quality by what the public is thought to want, are most at liberty to pursue sound-relationships and their historical background for their own sake, and may be expected to speak of these things from some reasonably detached corner of personal experience, inquiry and authority. In some cases they are special exponents of the issues and technicalities which are involved, not only by a given syllabus but by this and that branch of the art of music. There is no humbug about these statements. The best university teaching and the companionship of students from far and near are quite as important a stimulus for intellectual life as an examination syllabus, and as tokens of certain archetypes of thought and sentiment they are not replaced by an individual teacher, however illuminating. It will be clear from previous observations that this is not a tribute to the grammarian but rather to the bold and independent mind which faces facts but measures them at something like their true value.

So much for the specialists. We may now turn to students who, however primary their interest in music, take it as one of usually four and later three subjects in a general degree course. The normal syllabus includes harmony, counterpoint, history and sometimes acoustics, but roughly the linguistic and literary elements, represented by a paper each, are here of equivalent importance. The harmony and counterpoint are on the lines of the first two



years of the Bachelor of Music course, with certain relaxations. The counterpoint does not usually go beyond four parts (*three* is the limit in one instance) and there is no fugue. The attention to the sixteenth, eighteenth and vaguely nineteenth century styles remains, but presumably less precision of detail is required. The neglect of the homophonic styles persists. The history field may be

- (1) general;
- (2) orchestral music and instruments;
- (3) keyboard music and similar genres;
- (4) structures;
- (5) a period.

It will be noted that the framework of study does not differ in kind from the course for specialists. It is assumed that musical learning is of one or two kinds and must include an ability to handle the stuff of music like a composer. This is extremely debatable, and has no analogy in the syllabuses for a foreign language. Proficiency tests in the various styles are also commonly limited by their brevity; they can show whether a student has mugged up the grammar and melodic tendencies concerned—I choose a “jungle” word for a crude mental process—but not whether he can develop an integral thought contrapuntally, which is the only test worth having. Moreover, all the previous arguments may be pressed against keeping to the contrapuntal and so far more close-knit and elaborate styles.

Above all, few school musicians have had any experience which guides them to Palestrina and an attempt to write like him. Even Bach is difficult. Moreover, the demands of School Certificate and Higher harmony and counterpoint seem often incredibly vague and unreal. On the other hand, the development of melody, simply harmonized, in connection with the setting of words, would begin on a much firmer ground, for even in unison singing a school class may encounter what is virtually solo-song, from folk-song to classical and modern types, and encounter it often enough to retain the feel of melody as a vocal influence. From that stage it would be a comparatively simple step to the more cultivated music of *aria*, dance-movements and more extended movements of a homophonic nature. Once again, the neglect of all this is under grave suspicion of having been due to a mechanical pursuit of academic tradition and the most conveniently worked and marked examination, not considered educational policy. Palestrina, if deemed necessary to the general degree musician's salvation, may well be left to the third year. There is, incidentally, an unnatural feeling of bareness about two-part counterpoint in this style, with which some courses begin.

As much more familiar listening ground Bach may come earlier, preceded, as in his own teaching, by chorale-writing to inform the harmonic sense. And if Bach, why not at least fugal exposition? Not for the refinements of “answers”, which are commonly over-stated, but for the interest of producing characteristic counter-subjects. It is perhaps necessary to mention that while a whole fugue may be an imposition in an examination, no reasonable tutor

will fail to give suitable students the chance of writing fugues. Scholastic counterpoint is meaningless grind. It is no preparation for the sixteenth or eighteenth century styles, and most counterpoint originates from one or the other. Not that there is any objection to practising the writing of two, three, four and six notes to one of a *canto fermo* as a start at eighteenth-century work, in which the pursuit of such monotonous cross-rhythm is frequently heard. (In the sixteenth century such monotony is never found outside keyboard variations, so that there is little point in pursuing it, even if Morley recommended it to the amateurs whom he so cheerfully wished to instruct in sight-singing and, while he was about it, in composition.) All this is mere teaching detail, with which a syllabus should not be concerned. That must be framed to define the contrapuntal styles required, not the method of approach.

An outline of the history of orchestral music, and of instruments in this connection, is a useful introduction to a wider and more precise experience from the firm starting-point which school, radio and fortunate concert attendance can give. It may concentrate on certain historical or exquisite masterpieces, partly in prescribed works, and measure the grandeur of their developed structures without undue analysis. The classics may predominate, but there is every opportunity for paying attention to the newer music. Analogous courses of other instrumental types are acceptable alternatives, but the orchestral repertory is the richest in most respects. From this general acquaintance an attention to the common structures, some in detail, naturally follows. It need hardly be said that the need here is not to learn up formulae but to master given works, structurally, with sufficient intelligence to be able to analyse others capably. It is expedient to include modern examples as far as possible. Modern music is the thing for contemporary listeners to take stock of, and it is the trained listener of this kind who may be expected to respond to the challenge. The study of a historical period will best come last. A sense of history is a mature development, prompted by wide experience. It cannot be acquired by reading a history-book in the first-year. Nor should the period be too long. A century is the maximum. The twentieth century should not necessarily be excluded because it is difficult and inevitably controversial. If university men are not going to start thinking and deciding about some modern music, studying its textures and structures and assessing its historical high-spots, our *Radio Times* correspondent will, and good for him.

The common language and literature sides have now been detailed for general-degree music. Certain gaps may at once be mentioned, if this is to be considered as a fulfilment of school music. School and university will have failed if they do not prompt the more gifted musician, who for sundry reasons cannot take a specialist course, to attempt free composition. It is generally agreed that this cannot be made compulsory in any year, but credit might be given to voluntary contributions. Similarly, credit may be given for a performance of merit, preferably related to the syllabus for the year concerned.

No useful purpose would be served by making performance an alternative to some part of the academic syllabus, as in the School Certificate schedules

of certain Boards. It would be impossible to weigh executancy against academic attainment, and it would be confusing if a pass in music as part of the B.A. degree became so ambiguous. By the same token, objection may be raised to those doctorates which can be obtained by other than academic achievement. Mastery of an instrument calls for the utmost musical accuracy and judgment, but it also depends on a manual dexterity which provides no analogy to a scholar's research, assessment of alternative values and intellectual insight. The proper authority for awarding high diplomas or degrees in primarily practical music is an established college of music. At this stage, of all others, nothing is gained by talking as if different types of achievement were the same. This confusion of professional and cultural training is now in evidence at the school stage. It is declared (on equalitarian principles) that manual technique is as good as literary ability. It would be regrettable if this kind of valuation spread to post-graduate accomplishment.

Till recently, the Bachelor of Music course so far outlined and the syllabus for music as a part of the B.A. (the first at some universities, the second at others, and both at a few) have satisfied the respective authorities, and together have represented the collective wisdom and enterprise of university administrators, some of whom are convinced that a Bachelor of Music is not only a good musician but the only valid type. But the need for something less specialized on the composition side than the common or garden B.Mus., and at the same time taking music as a principal subject, has become apparent in view of the small but widening stream of students who now come from school with that knowledge of music which has engendered an appetite for it as a main diet, but without the aural qualifications of the specialist. For these certain universities have framed courses of Honours music, either as Honours B.Mus. or for B.A. with Honours. These include (after a qualifying examination) harmony and counterpoint, history (various periods), acoustics, analysis and criticism or a thesis, instrumentation, keyboard tests and composition or thesis and research. The criticism or general paper appears to transfer the emphasis from creative resource (or assimilation of models) to an ability to size up music accurately and judiciously. Its scope lends great opportunity to an enlightened coach. Bookwork is necessary, but not nearly enough. The instrumentation work may be regarded as the instrumental counterpart of counterpoint, that is, as a qualifying test in composition. Composition is variously treated. Of the two B.A. schemes known to me in detail, at university A there are three final papers and a fourth on fugue, each tests in the application of technique; and examples of class-work are to be submitted. At university B a sonata movement and a fugue must be submitted by a certain date. There are no papers, apart from the harmony, counterpoint and instrumentation. In the second case the aim is apparently to obtain enough individual work in the horizontal and contrapuntal styles to show insight, scholarship and some personal quality. In the first case these tests are more rigid, and to them is added that of mental agility; but in the



second case there will be more scope for second and third intimations. A third scheme prescribes a fugue paper and either a composition or thesis. This is for Honours B.Mus.

History is also defined with marked differences. University A above (whose Honours course falls into two parts, either of which may be taken in another subject than music) requires

- (1) general history and the history of structures or instruments;
- (2) two special periods (of mainly two centuries each).

University B prescribes

- (1) music up to 1625;
- (2) choral and orchestral, embracing opera;
- (3) orchestral and chamber;
- (4) keyboard and song;

each genre has a paper, with a considerable number of set works; the lives of certain composers also figure in the syllabus. University C prefers

- (1) orchestral and chamber;
- (2) keyboard and opera;
- (3) choral music and song;

but agrees with university B in regarding the history of *types* of music as organic wholes rather than the history of a period. University A thus appears to call for general knowledge within certain limits, and doubtless the tutors enjoin a thorough acquaintance with typical works. University B is precise in its minimum scope, covering cumulatively a wide field of musical activity from Palestrina to Delius, from the Mass in B minor and *Die Meistersinger* to the Ravel sonatina; but a view of the woods in which these trees occur is also expected. This course may thus be regarded as inspired by a belief in object-lessons. (It is perhaps of some relevance that Bach attended at Ohrdruf a school declared to be founded on the principles of Comenius, and certainly became an exponent of the industriously concrete rather than of the theoretic approach to musical knowledge.)

Keyboard tests include normal performance and reading from score. The standard of performance may be amateur rather than professional, but executive refinement and judgment must doubtless be shown. There is a case against this inclusion of an activity which is only practicable in fortunate school or home circumstances. The score reading, however, is a test of quick co-ordination of eye, hand and brain without demanding special pianistic achievement. At university B students must offer a subsidiary subject and be able to translate a suitable text in French, German or Italian with dictionaries. They must also attend choral or orchestral rehearsals and in general take an active part in university music. Other universities have Honours syllabuses in music and a language. Work in music is on lines already described, suitably lightened.

It will be interesting to see how the products of these Honours courses compare and differ. It will be still more interesting to see if the other

universities follow suit. The need is urgent. There are many musicians who are keen enough to make a career of music—whether as schoolmaster, adviser or regional director—but could not hope, and do not actually need, to become Bachelors of Music in the sense in which it has been defined earlier in this paper; but they do need a primarily musical training. There are also the musical but widely gifted who may become civil servants of high rank, programme directors, school heads and all the other things which demand a highly cultivated intelligence. For these music, it is to be hoped, will establish itself as a training for mind and spirit second to none, just as (in competent and active hands) it has already proved a far from soft optional contribution towards a general degree. There is no reason why, with efficient administration, Honours music should not rank with other more traditional courses as education of the highest order, besides representing an excellent preparation for social life and for a general career of music. There were, no doubt, similar heartburnings over making common-sense hobbies like History and English and Mathematics into full-power examination subjects, and the many who generalize mightily from frivolous experiences of “appreciation” will hasten to sneer at music as an Honours subject for B.A. The task of certain music tutors to keep the edges sharp and the scope liberal is therefore an interesting one. The prestige of music is at stake in a new sense. The more special lines of the Bachelor of Music course will maintain their reputation for preliminary mastery of the technique of composition, but they will always represent vocational training (or career-bolstering) rather than the wider claims of education.

The doctorate is traditionally an extension of the Bachelor courses in music. Elaborate qualifications in the technique of composition, including in some cases the mental agility to cope with an inexorable clock, in others the accomplishment expected of deliberate and final thought, are supplemented by tests in musical knowledge. Vocational training, rather than any rare knowledge or monumental critical ability, appears to be the aim. It is noticeable that many organists and schoolmasters but few professional critics are Doctors. The doctorate is in fact the subject of considerable snobbery in many quarters. Its dubious relevance for school and choirmaster appointments is recognized by wise executives (where these are found), and the number of present holders of university chairs who are Doctors by any scheme of examination is definitely a small proportion. The reasons are fairly obvious. A Chair usually involves examining in all music degrees, but it involves in the first place the dynamic of a good all-round educator, and in the second the claims of scholarship and research (or these two in reverse order). As at a school, the gifted musician of creative leanings is not always the best organizer of a department, nor is he necessarily a good critic of a style not his own, nor even a knowledgeable person. For the sheer musical ignorance and inexperience of some Doctors I could personally vouch, and their musicological interest sometimes begins and ends with the minimum requirements of this post-graduate syllabus. In other words, once the real objective has been achieved, namely the prospects of greater advancement in position (and bank-balance), many give up the chase.

Whereas, of course, the genuine composer or critic never ceases to pursue the relationships which have fascinated him from college days. There may be analogies in other subjects, but broadly there are not. Once again it may be suggested that it is a misdirection of public opinion when one title means gravely different mental qualifications. The rejection of Dr. A in favour of Mr. B. in a number of historic appointments is a clear sign that university opinion which carries weight puts a query to a doctorate as such, and is prepared to disregard it in favour of more discernibly sharp mental edges and a pronounced educational "drive". The same thing may arise over the appointment of external examiners, if a change of accent from creative technique to historical judgment is desired. All this is not, of course, to deny the validity of many awards at the post-graduate stage. But the pure technicians (or wangers) bring the side down.

At some universities a thesis replaces the main composition required elsewhere. This brings the degree more into line. At other universities performance or conducting is an integral alternative, and this recognition of practical musicianship seems misplaced. Honorary doctorates (including the archbishops') are honorary doctorates. There is no unwritten formula to discuss. A diversity of creatures have become and pass as *echt* Doctors in this way.

Such are the main academic courses in music. They may not at present involve large schools, but they provide for a small output of tolerably qualified and enthusiastic musicians of various sorts, who are urgently needed to lead the common mind at school, in education departments, in music businesses of various types, in churches, and possibly in the higher ranks of the Civil Service. There are at least two powerful streams against which a stand is needed, with all the strength and knowledge that may be mustered. One is the stream of light music, which in due measure is suitable enough for some people but fatally apt to spoil all appetite for more solid fare, as chocolate cake puts the young of all ages off bread and butter. The other stream is the comparatively innocuous but nevertheless insidious one of performances of the safe classics, with a resultant non-taste for later or other music, usually amounting to distaste. What classics is a matter of environment, but it makes little difference, if it continues to persist exclusively. In many cases the university is the last chance of knocking a corner or two off the yes-man in music. A capacity for assimilation, even a thirst for knowledge, counts for nothing in this issue, unless it arouses a will to judge and a nerve to reject.

In some respects the unacademic musical efforts of a university official are the widest in social range and the deepest in effect, because the most well grounded in immediate adolescent need. The maintenance of a choral society and orchestra has long been regarded as one of the obvious opportunities of a resident musician. What was pioneer work on the part of H. P. Allen and others is now in a sense a commonplace and increasingly pervasive feature of university life. But there was more to Allen's magnetic art than an

uncommonly dynamic personality. The Oxford Bach Choir set out to explore Bach, not stopping at the *St. Matthew Passion* and the B minor Mass, and they went on to the Beethoven Mass in D, *A Sea Symphony*, *The Hymn of Jesus*, and so forth. The result has been that undergraduates left the university not only invigorated by personal experience of great works (Allen threw his personality *into* the music) but with their minds stretched to something like adult measure, not merely to the attainment of a good school chorus. Drawing upon men and women from most of the schools where choral achievement has been long standing, strengthened by a firm and loyal group of permanent residents, Allen was able to carry out many ventures of his daring spirit, the orchestra struggling but pursuing. In that formative period there was nothing much else to be had on the spot, and the music was the thing, no less at the rehearsal than at the final performance, which was often no more than a public integration of what had been going on all the term. To-day conductors are much more aware of constant and unpleasant comparisons, and of strong rival appeals to the traditional and monumental. Further, at the universities which draw their *clientèle* mainly from national schools it may not be so easy to obtain a steady stream of experienced and keen choralists; the demobilized appear to be chary of giving up an evening a week "on chance". Nevertheless, ground is lost when the programme of work in three years is confined to Handel and Bach, or something like it, and in principle to what can finally be produced in the appropriate hall or church and with the orchestra available for the purpose. Something in the nature of a choral repertory class, not at all dilettante in musical objective but not bothered with considerations of balance and resonance or even exact rhythm and intonation, is plainly needed to supplement a season of safer music. The plain fact is that most choral activity is the occupation of humble-minded and conservative folk, one street beyond the people who will not do music unless it is "entertaining" (*i.e.* usually Sullivan). Alternatively, it is pursued by those who are less interested in the scope of the music than in being *seen* by their relatives and fellow townfolk. At all events, it was not by joining Handel Societies that choruses called Brahms or Parry or Elgar or Walton to a new or primary exercise of their personality. It is among the responsibilities of university directors to see that the choralism they encourage is as generous in outlook as is practicable, besides developing sight-reading and singing tone. If they do not, the more enterprising spirits will curse them later in life, when they find what trails they have missed. This happens more often than is commonly realized.

Choral activity is the most obvious continuation of school experience, whether it is direct continuation or involves the new experience of part-singing and of extended musical work. The same applies, for a small proportion, to orchestral activity. Here, again, universities which draw heavily upon the independent schools are more likely to be well off for strings and wind than those who have to rely on those secondary schools which have taken up orchestral work. In any case, the expense of instruments is so crippling that it will now be the turn of the universities to buy stock instruments if they wish to continue the work of schools with like accommodation. The potentialities

are beyond dispute. Here, too, to confine works under rehearsal to what is thought practicable for a concert programme will probably be limiting.

The continuation of such listening classes as are found in the best schools, where it is realized that choral and unison singing and instrumental teaching are not the only ways of introducing music to the many, is far less widely taken for granted, partly owing to an inevitable shyness in responding to it; but certain schemes of gramophone recitals-with-comment have established themselves at particular universities, and a reasonable library of records, with scores to match, is virtually a necessity, though it is often a considerable job to administer. There are possibilities in general lectures on composers or some general aspect of texture or structure. Music is one of the few things in which *any* student may be interested, one of the few heritages of which all sorts and conditions are conscious. But the bridge between The Ballet Music (I was thinking of Schubert's, but it does not matter whose) and the Brahms symphonies is a long one, and it sometimes needs encouragement to make it. There is equally a need for planned concert-schemes of song-recitals and chamber music and, if possible, orchestral music, introducing a nice blend of classical and modern works. Nor can opera be left out of consideration, and some happy universities are able to keep an opera club going. In default of this, some presentation of the vernacular basis of music, in the art-songs of many nations, is a prime necessity. Sooner or later, however, a lecturer becomes aware that he is in danger of beating the air in this country because so few people realize how fundamental opera has been as a starting-point of national style, new colour-schemes, new harmonies and new expansions of structure. For this reason a university which is in touch with a conservatoire can provide many *entrées* which at other universities have to be furnished in token form, that is, through machines.

The choice of activities to be intensely and regularly organized in parallel with the academic courses is nominally in the hands of the official music department. In practice music is frequently a subject on which any academic know-body who has had some contact with the art may press, with the presumption of high rank, his or her dogmatic, exclusive and not always enlightened views. For some amateurs, whether performers or concertgoers or gramophonists, the only music is private or public concerts, and in particular what was good or bad enough for them in their student days. They have no knowledge of academic music except as a degree-winning activity, or of the immensely wider outlook which improved school teaching, radio and gramophone have between them provided. This attitude is common enough at a school where the head takes his cue, not from his music masters, but from some special "musical" crony; but it is surprising that such intellectual immodesty can positively flourish at a university. There is enough evidence of this kind of interference from various quarters to make it worth mentioning as a new feature of our more egalitarian life, in which any one may be filled with a sense of personal significance through music. It remains to try to convince such detractors that however sociable an art music may be claimed to be, it has also its immeasurable individual outlets, of which counterpoint



and historical inquiry are certainly two. On the other hand, the brilliant departmental head is not always in touch with the largely amateur field with which, whether he likes it or not, he is partly and perhaps (but for the know-bodies) solitarily concerned.

Formal or informal, official or officious, the kind of musical life in prospect at the university is likely to be more important than ever in the near future, when the School Certificate is dropped and the pressure to take music as a subject, to make the necessary complement of likely passes or credits, ceases. It is common experience that that school which regularly raises a school certificate class in music is the kind of school which engages a whole-time and more or less specialist music teacher, who will start a choral group and orchestra and listening groups, and so on. Without this nucleus of "business" requirement, an unmusical or anti-musical head may not bother. In future there will remain, instead, the legend that a given form of musical activity or exercise will be socially helpful or academically an integral part of university life, and will be appetisingly presented and shrewdly planned just one stage beyond the school standard that may be expected. Quite apart from this, the school stage has immeasurably improved and in fact changed its face over a wide cross-section, variable as it is. In many respects schools have not waited for the universities. They have framed their own formula for distilling a developed musicianship from common experience. That is broadly the contribution of the musicians to the forty-year struggle for dignity and distinct quality in which the English Grammar School has been engaged, and which it is now (some say) due to renew for another forty years in order to maintain a justifiable existence contrasted with the independent schools, on the one hand—not only the best but the worst, which are almost as pressed to take entrants in the present scramble of a minority for social places a scratch above the common level—and on the other hand against the modern and technical schools, or the corresponding departments of the Common School, whose far less highly trained teachers receive equal pay for a nine-to-four day. The initiative may now pass noticeably to the universities, if they modernize their curriculum to meet the new needs for an inviting musical future of amateur activity for a large minority (as before) and a *reasonable variety* of grades in the academic courses for the select few who, whatever their ability and schooling, are anxious to take that step forward which will enable them to make a career or a major interest of music.

Admittedly the lecturer who is keen on his own private creative work or research will be tempted to cry, To-morrow! and for many university graduates the balance of claims is a constant strain. Nor, of course, will personal inquiry and assessment in rare paths do anything but good to their influence as a university teacher. But there is a canker of indifference in the oak, nevertheless, which the fittest surviving branch will not ignore.

So far we have been concerned with the direct teaching which a university may offer through the provision of a syllabus, examinations, lectures, tutorials, recitals, societies. But to complete the picture within the terms of reference, mention at least must be made of the rarity of the English appointments which

give adequate time and opportunity for research, still more of those which are exclusively musicological in scope. Indeed, most tutors and lecturers are overburdened with teaching and professors with correspondence, at the present time of generally expanding numbers and a more or less perceptible movement towards music courses. It must be confessed that English lecturers in music are living on that store of discovered fact which has been accumulated in the past, mainly by foreign scholars. It is no exaggeration to say that many old-time professors have regarded a Chair as an honour rather than the call of a lifetime. There have been signal exceptions and they are now happily on the increase. It remains for the present generation to make up for lost time, so to speak, and for the wider university world to realize that however much good unparalleled performances of the *Choral* Symphony and other established masterpieces may do to university outlook, music is also a subject with a past heritage of the unknown as compelling as any other language. A few minor and major credits may be claimed by university musicians, and much will be expected of the new *Oxford History of Music*. But the corpus of Tudor madrigals and church music and Purcell in authoritative editions is scarcely to be compared, for instance, with the German, Bavarian and Austrian *Denkmäler*. From another point of view, there is no manual on the harmonic texture of any nineteenth-century composer, and little on the twentieth century beyond sociable introductions. In more senses than one, we have a debt to the past. It awaits payment, and the day of reckoning is to-day, not to-morrow.

And the end? Technically material knowledge, emotional expansion and health, mental agility, vocational qualification. Professionally an answer to the implicit school challenges of ignorance in some quarters and a heroically evoked groundwork of experience in others. Socially, a generous response to the wide, infectious enthusiasm and rich variety of modern university life. Artistically, a sensitive appreciation of the not quite ordinary nature of music as a subject or pursuit. Intellectually, curiosity and independence. But in the deeper recesses of personality some teachers will look for an enhancement of individuality and social life that so transcends conscious capacity and control as to constitute a special order of experience, in which private understanding and awareness of a common heritage have been enlightened by a sense of discovery, conviction and inner direction. It is necessary to mention these recognitions of the spiritual factor at a time when special technical knowledge and organizational virtuosity may seem to reign supreme in the life of study. It is in the long run because of these convictions that a musician may be as fit as any one to add personal significance to human life, to guide with understanding a jarring world, and to testify to the growing heritage of civilized man. If the foregoing testimony seems more often than not a testimony of dissatisfaction, it is not necessarily the less a product of conviction. If the heritage sketched seems notably incomplete, the sketch has at least been made. If it seems unsympathetic to past or present labourers in the field,

no personal slight or writer's grievance is intended, and what liberty of speech has been claimed is open to all. Let it be admitted that in the past time has been wasted on music, and that time which has been spent on other things or elsewhere might have been spent on university music. Let it also be admitted that for a long art the time for social readjustment is imperatively short, and that on the other hand the independence of the universities is something of a sanctuary in a savage, barrack world. Let the sanctuary doors be opened widely and watchfully. I for one am happy but not contented.

## Book Review

*Philosophie der neuen Musik.* By Theodor W. Adorno. Pp. viii + 144. (J. C. B. Mohr: Tübingen.) 1949.

The "modern music" of Dr. Adorno's book is that of Schönberg, Stravinsky, Berg and Webern. The last two composers are mentioned only incidentally and the main sections of the book are entitled—Schönberg and Progress; Stravinsky and Restoration. The author's actual exposition of twelve-note technique—"Schönberg's integration of the unconnected"—is lucid and compelling. In the works written in this style, he says, Schönberg permits no emergence of any of music's individual elements—melody, harmony, the symmetrically extensive, the ornament, even the nuance; these he has renounced in order to bring about a convergence of *all* musical dimensions. By the very act of removing its traditional and metaphysical connotations from music he has elevated it to a position of greater significance, just as when

... das ästhetische Objekt als reines Diesda bestimmt werden soll, geht es gerade vermöge dieser negativen Bestimmung, der Absage an alles Übergreifende, der es als seinem Gesetz unterliegt, über das reine Diesda hinaus.

Stravinsky is, for Dr. Adorno, at the opposite pole from Schönberg. Whereas Schönberg achieves modernity by moving onward and away from traditional music, Stravinsky achieves it by moving back—to its origins; and the archaic elements of this composer's work are fully explored. The pages which deal with these complementary, but frequently contradictory, aspects of Stravinsky's music, bristle with the term "schizophrenia", and the fact that the "Restoration" of the title is often replaced by "Regression" reveals the author's feelings on the matter.

All these concrete analyses are admirable; readers of the novel *Doktor Faustus* will be interested to know that Thomas Mann, in a warm tribute to the author, owns his indebtedness to them. But Dr. Adorno is much less convincing in his philosophic treatment of the music of the two composers. He seeks to find in the music which they have provided for plays and ballets the ideals and ideologies of the plays and ballets themselves. It will be readily admitted that when a composer chooses to provide such music, there is that in the ballet, or song, or opera, which finds a response in his own nature: Beethoven's choice of *Fidelio* is a case in point. But it is surely pressing the argument too hard to go on, and seek in the created music close analogies with the non-musical elements. It would be like trying to find in the very *Fidelio* music itself, matrimonial fidelity exemplified by "faithful" theme and procedure. Yet this is the kind of approach which Dr. Adorno makes to the musical material of Schönberg and Stravinsky: it sometimes strikes the reader as mere idea-spinning—or, as is so often the case in German philosophy, mere word-spinning. We may surely grant Schönberg's submergence of music's individuality without seeking its origins in the politico-ideological development of *Die glückliche Hand*.

M. J. E. B.



## *An Unknown Rossini Overture*

### *Report of a Discovery in Odense*

BY

POVL INGERSLEV-JENSEN

ON 1st May, 1948, the Danish press announced that an overture of Rossini—unknown for at least one hundred years—had suddenly come to light in the town of Odense. The circumstances are as follows:

Called to Odense in September, 1946, as conductor of the newly-organized city orchestra, my first duty was to put into working order an archive of scores for the daily use of the orchestra. This was pioneer work. Hitherto the orchestra had managed with scores procured haphazard, or borrowed from private persons. To be sure there was an old collection of scores of symphonies and overtures, mostly hand-written, which, because of the danger of fire during the recent war, had been placed in safety in one of the bomb shelters under the court house. This material was turned over to me and I began with great anticipation to examine it. I soon found that it fell far short of my expectations. Most of it was so old that time had made it difficult or impossible to decipher. Much was incomplete. Some of it was written with the same hand-writing, presumably that of a contemporary copyist, probably foreign, since we must conclude that many of these works came to Odense with traveling opera companies, which often gave performances at the old theatre on the Black Brothers' Square. [One may read of these performances in the book by the Odense teacher, Karl Schmidt: *Report on Acting and Theatre Conditions in Odense*, Odense, 1896.]

While looking through a portfolio of Rossini's overtures containing printed copies of *Elisabetta* and *The Barber of Seville* (which operas are preceded by the same overture although one is tragic, the other comic), *The Victory of Corinth* and others, I found at the bottom of the pile, to my great amazement, an overture entitled "Unnamed".

Thanks to the skilful and extremely thorough Italian music historian, Giuseppe Radiciotti, we have to-day a bibliography of Rossini's works, the date of their performance, place and number, such as rarely exists for other composers. Yet in spite of this careful work, compositions of the master still appear. A year ago a hitherto unknown manuscript came to light in Forlì, Italy, five pages of notes with text dated 1821. Perhaps some day a whole opera will be found.

Is this unnamed overture in Odense further proof of the rich flow from the spring of the master's genius? The overture had no score but consisted of 24 hand-written parts (by the above copyist) from about 1830-40 with hand-drawn lines. It is difficult to determine to which nationality the opera troupe and copyist belonged because the manuscript is a Babylonian mixture of languages. The title is "Ouverture", which according to the spelling might

be either German or French. One part is called "Violoncell et Basso", another "Basso und Violoncello". All the parts have Rossini's signature, di R., von R. or simply R. written alternately in ink and pencil. Some of the parts even lack the title "Overture".

The parts are distributed as follows: 3 "violino primo" (namely 6 first violins), 3 "violino secondo", 1 viola, 2 violoncello and bass, flauto primo, flauto secondo, oboe primo, oboe secondo, clarinetto primo in A, clar. secondo in A, fagotto primo, fagotto secondo, corno primo in A, corno secondo in A, corni in E (double part), trompetti in D (double part), 2 tromboni bassi (double part), timpani in A and E, and finally drum and triangle (double part). When I combined these parts in score it became clear that they were complete—truly a miracle when one considers the condition of the rest of the archive.

Moreover it was obvious because of several parts which were crossed out, corrected and added to, sometimes in ink, lead or red pencil, that they had been used for performance, which is also hinted at by the date on one of the secondo violino parts: 6-10-42, which is written in lead pencil.

In order to be even more certain I went through the programmes and lists of concert performances in Odense during the last war, but found the overture nowhere. Even discussions with members of the orchestra who had performed all the concerts during this period brought no information to light about the overture. Therefore it must be concluded that the year is 1842. It is even more difficult to be sure of this point because the archive in Odense only contains scanty information about musical performances so long ago. But the date itself tells something. According to the newspaper *Fyns Stiftstidende* for 6-10-1842 the town was fêting its governor, at that time the crown prince, later King Frederik the 7th. It is quite possible that an opera troupe gave a performance for the governor of the island; that he perhaps was present at the theatre with his recently chosen bride, Princess Charlotte Mariane; or that the orchestra performed at the castle.

If one is to judge by the many mistakes in the parts of the overture, one has the impression that the public's enjoyment of the performance in 1842 must have been questionable. From a historical point of view it is interesting to see that such a nonchalant approach to a musical composition was tolerated then. Or perhaps the musicians were clever at interpreting a "half-sung ditty". In any case, the public was neither as discriminating nor as demanding as in our time. There was often a veritable hubbub of chattering and chair-scraping during the overture to a theatre performance, and although one listened it did not mean that one necessarily kept quiet. Approval and disapproval were immediately and loudly voiced, so neither the performer nor the listener noticed a mistake or two. "The good old days" when one, as we imagine to-day, had the time for everything, do not seem to apply to opera compositions of 100 years ago.

We do not know to-day whether this new-found overture has been played since 1842, but it is unlikely, both because it is nameless (which could easily detract from a concert programme) and specially since these old archives have led an isolated and forgotten existence for so long that they are relatively

unadaptable for interpretation on a concert platform. Should anyone have information on this phase of the overture's existence, it would be eagerly accepted.

Although neither words nor examples suffice to describe music, perhaps certain characteristics described in detail will give a slight impression and awaken the appetite for more knowledge. Therefore I shall give a short account of "the Unnamed".

The key is A major. The beginning is marked *Moderato*, and after a few chords the strings, flute and clarinet announce this theme:



This motive is picked up and developed by the bassoon which capers away in a long, masterly solo, delicately and feelingly accompanied by the remaining groups in alternating small phrases. The introduction leads to a cadence, in which the first violins climb upward in airy phrases to be replaced by the clarinets which conclude the section alone, introducing immediately after an *allegro vivace* in 3/8 time.

The clarinet, accompanied by waltz-like figurations, soon shows more clearly than any title who is the composer of this work:



The motive is not immediately fully developed, but is broken off by decisive chords and by an increasingly exciting *fermata*. Then the whole orchestra comes in with the main theme. Later a charming secondary theme arrives as a pulsing, rustling reminiscence of the noisy tumult, a distant, retrospective airing of the bubbling southern gaiety which has just faded.



Unbelievable that anything so full of life can have slumbered so long!

The Overture was, most probably, a creation of Rossini's youth. Its form reminds one of *Tancredi* (1813), while its secondary theme has an unmistakable likeness to *The Thieving Magpie* (1817). There are, of course, many phrases

in Rossini's overtures which are strikingly alike both in type and melodic and rhythmic character, but the whole orchestral arrangement of this newly-found example points to the years between 1813 and 1817. Therefore if one takes the common denominator one can most certainly conclude that it originated from about the time of *The Barber of Seville*.

We are unable to identify the Overture with any opera through its themes because it was very seldom that Rossini introduced the operas' characteristic motives in his overtures. Rossini's *aria* and ensemble introductions often contain brilliant descriptions of characteristic situations in the succeeding music, and he was one of the first exponents of this form, but he has never written so-called "potpourri overtures". Only 3 of the 22, namely *The Thieving Magpie*, *The Victory of Corinth* and *Semiramis*, have one or two motives taken from the opera itself, and even they are not the most characteristic. Rossini allots a special function to the overture. This aim is an independent artistic product, an introduction, less meant to put the audience into the spirit of the opera than to awaken, entertain and please.

Since the sceptics have questioned first, that the work comes from Rossini's hand, next that it is unknown—for as we know, miracles only happen to those who believe—I have sent a copy of the themes to the Conservatorio di Musica Gioacchino Rossini in Pesaro, where most of "il grande's" autographs are preserved.

The answer was that a committee has examined all the unpublished manuscripts there, but that none of the quoted themes were to be found. However, the committee was agreed that they could be ascribed only to Rossini.

One may now congratulate the city of Odense for this rare find, and hope that this Overture may be granted a worthy return and an everlasting life.

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## Richard Strauss, 1864-1949

BY

EGON WELLESZ

WHEN a great composer dies, his contemporaries cannot foretell whether his work as a whole will survive, or only parts of it, nor is it easy for them to foresee the possibility that his fame may vanish soon after his death, only later to shine out more gloriously than before.

When Verdi died, who would have thought that some of the operas of his middle period, *Forza del Destino*, for example, or *Macbeth* or *Don Carlos*, would ever again figure in the repertories of our opera houses? Or, to take an even more striking example, who among Schubert's friends and contemporaries would have thought that his fame as a symphonic composer would gradually rise to such a height that now, a hundred and twenty years after his death, two of his symphonies hold a place in the repertory only to be compared with that of Beethoven's?

I should not dare, therefore, so soon after his death, to try to determine the historical position of Richard Strauss among contemporary musicians. All I can do is to give a brief survey of his work and draw attention to that part of his musical activity on which most of his energy was expended: his operas.

### I

To most musicians in this country Richard Strauss is the successful composer of some songs which became famous at the beginning of the present century and were sung all over the world, some "tone-poems", and of *Salome*, *Elektra* and *Rosenkavalier*. They did not witness the dramatic rise to fame of the revolutionary musician that he was when he broke away from the traditional path he had followed as a young man. In my youth I talked to musicians who remembered the storm caused by the last movement of his Symphony, *Aus Italien*, in which he introduced the then famous Neapolitan popular song *Funiculi*, treating it with an exuberant gaiety which shocked the concert-going public who, after the beautiful first three movements, had expected a solid finale in the Brahmsian manner.

This work reflects the impressions of a journey to Italy in 1886 when Strauss had given up his first position as conductor of the "Meiningen Hofkapelle", where he had succeeded Hans von Bülow to whom *Aus Italien* is dedicated. It marks the turning point of his career as a musician, who for the next twenty years was to be the leading figure among modern composers on the Continent.

Every orchestral work of his, from *Don Juan* to *Ein Heldenleben*, caused a sensation and was hotly discussed, for in every new work he introduced new, daring harmonies, augmented the colours of the orchestra and invented new combinations of instruments which baffled the listener.

In almost every work for orchestra, indeed, and in every one of his operas Strauss altered the composition of the orchestra, a sign, I consider, that from

the beginning of a composition he had the vision of a certain definite orchestral colouring. There was none among contemporary composers who had his mastery of the orchestra. He understood every effect that can be got out of an instrument. He owed this mastery to the fact that from his twenty-first year he conducted the finest orchestras. His technique differed sharply from that of other famous conductors. In the greatest crescendos he remained apparently unmoved and rarely raised his arm. He did most of his conducting by forward movements of his arms from the elbow. His body was almost motionless. Yet so strong was his influence that every orchestra played under him with more confidence and with a greater stimulus than under any of the more "interesting" conductors.

The following anecdote comes from the last years of his life. He was listening to a rehearsal of one of his latest works which the orchestra found difficult, nor did the rehearsal satisfy the conductor who wielded his baton with all the passion at his command. Strauss turned to his neighbour, and remarked: "One can't conduct with a baton!", stood up, and asked the conductor whether he might conduct the rehearsal himself. Then the miracle happened. Strauss made signs with the baton that were hardly perceptible, but his eye went from one group of players to another giving the entries, and the orchestra played the work through completely under the spell of the composer.

Strauss was a conductor of quick tempi. In his own works he suppressed the subordinate parts so that the main lines were clearly brought out.\* He never allowed the orchestra to get too loud, a *ff* generally became a *ffp*. The power of suggestion that he exercised over the orchestra enabled him to get the greatest intensity from the music in spite of the rapid tempi. I remember hearing the best performance of Wagner's *Die Walküre* that I ever heard, under Strauss in Vienna, in which the last act, uncut, took fifty minutes instead of seventy. It was a *tour-de-force* which Strauss could only have achieved with an orchestra and an ensemble of singers that he knew well, but the magical effect that he obtained showed that this unorthodox interpretation had its dramatic justification.

As a conductor of classical music Strauss has been famous for the last ten years. To begin with, however, his performances of the classics met with resistance because, like Gustav Mahler, he protested against the unduly heavy, pompous style of performance which was general at that time, and he insisted on completely restudying the well-known works that every orchestra believed itself to be sufficiently well acquainted with already. He insisted on a perfect rendering of classical works and for this very reason he once earned the reproach of being a "despiser of the classics". It was in March, 1903, when he refused to perform Beethoven's *Eroica* with the newly formed "Tonkünstler" Orchestra in Vienna, because he was convinced that a new orchestra could not perform a work like the *Eroica* sufficiently well.

The way in which he defended himself from this reproach was characteristic

\* Cf. the records he made recently for Deutsche Grammophon of *Don Quixote* and *Ein Heldenleben* [Ed.].



of the lighthearted and witty composer of *Till Eulenspiegel*, the *enfant terrible* among contemporary composers; he got to grips with his critics in his newest symphonic poem, *Ein Heldenleben*, in the section entitled "Des Helden Widersacher".

It is difficult for an audience unfamiliar with the Germany of this time to understand the mixture of seriousness and satire in this orchestral work which shows the greatest technical mastery, but which, as a work of art, leaves behind it an unsatisfactory impression, in spite of the fact that large parts of it fascinate us through the power and beauty of the music. But almost all the artists who lived in the Germany of William II have something of the bombast which characterized the public life of the period, in spite of the fact that the greatest of them, including Richard Strauss, set themselves in opposition to the "Wilhelminische Kultur". But they all took themselves and their work too seriously, because they were surrounded with an aura of hero-worship which could not but rob them of their sense of proportion. As a South German, Strauss took care not to appear pompous as a man, but his music often shows the weakness of his time, until he came into contact with Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who forced Strauss to rely on his guidance in matters of art.

Many contradictions in Strauss' work are explained by his Bavarian origin. He was born in Munich which, through the Court and its immediate circle, had become the artistic centre of Germany.

The artists who lived in Munich at that time, the time during which Strauss grew up, played an important rôle in the life of the town. They were extremely gregarious and celebration followed celebration in a carnival-like existence. Strauss was the most brilliant exponent of this society.

Whatever the subject he chooses, his music always shows traces of the spirit of his native country, a strange mixture of artistic sensibility and coarseness of taste, of wit and sentimentality, refinement and lack of *savoir faire*. As a great composer, Strauss was well aware of the faults of his people, which he castigates in his opera *Feuersnot*, but he himself, as I have said, was not entirely free from them. I have always felt that some of his early songs show a Bavarian sentimentality, and he sometimes shows lack of taste when he takes refuge in banal phrases where the music ought to have been most effective, for example in Zarathustra's dance, or in the dance of Salome, or in Joseph's dance. Here Strauss did not penetrate to the heart of the matter, but remained on the surface, conjuring up all the most glittering sounds of the orchestra but without any true emotional effect.

One might ask how such a failure at an important point in the work is possible. The answer is not hard to find if Strauss' work is considered as a whole, and the limitations of his personality are taken into account. Richard Strauss was, in his inmost being, like most Munich artists a man of this world. He was not at his ease in the sphere of immaterial things. This is apparent from most of his symphonic poems, most of all from *Also sprach Zarathustra*. The dance of Zarathustra is something which it is not possible to express in music. Strauss, who at this time was still poking fun at the "Spiessbürger" of Munich, presents *himself* as the superman, for whom all problems finally

resolve themselves in a dance—which is a Munich waltz. In the same way he later made himself the chief figure of *Heldenleben*, and finally, returning to the bourgeois way of life, made himself and his family into the characters of the charming *Sinfonia domestica*, his best solution to the problem, for it reveals the best side of Strauss' nature, the intensity of his lyrical powers, and his humour.

Strauss indeed is always at his best when he can draw on his strong lyrical vein or his sense of humour. A born dramatist, he was able to reach great heights when he was inspired by his subject matter and, above all, by the words of a great poet. His romantic inheritance can be felt in the swift flow of his music, which prefers a veiled rhythmical pattern to the rhythmical precision so characteristic of the Viennese classical tradition.

The unbroken flow, the art of imperceptible transitions, are traits highly characteristic of Strauss' music, as is also his superb technique of inventing short motives made up of a few notes which carry the melody and which can also be used as contrapuntal parts. Strauss developed this technique gradually in his symphonic poems, and brought it to great perfection in his *Sinfonia domestica*.

The following example will make this clear:

"Sinfonia Domestica" p. 80

**Ex. 1**

The musical score for Example 1 is presented in two systems. The first system contains three staves: a treble staff, an alto staff, and a bass staff. The second system contains two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The music is written in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and 3/4 time. It features intricate rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and various dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), and *sf* (sforzando). The notation includes many beamed notes and rests, creating a dense, flowing texture characteristic of Strauss's style.

Through this technique Strauss wove all the subordinate parts into the thematic texture and loosened the orchestration so that sustained chords are restricted to the utmost. A similar process can be seen at the same period in the work of Schönberg. This technique had the advantage of enlivening the playing of the subordinate parts for the members of the orchestra; the parts gain in intensity because they become contrapuntal. On the other hand it results in a weakening of the rhythmical element in the composition and in too great a concentration on detail, on the part of both composer and listener. Looking back we



can recognize that this technique, whose application Strauss restricted after the period of *Elektra*, led to a transformation of the grand orchestra into a gigantic chamber orchestra, whose subtleties became ineffective in the hands of less gifted composers, and resulted in a "music for the eye" whose incessant agitations wearied instead of stimulating. Strauss himself, in a preface to his last opera *Capriccio*, took a stand against the symphonic technique in opera, and one of his last orchestral works, the oboe Concerto, shows that in instrumental music too he came to prefer a simpler style.

## II

The symphonic poems were written between 1886 and 1898. They are, as a witty critic once wrote, "unwritten operas". Strauss was too wise to follow the example of the other German composers who thought that one could continue the work of Richard Wagner. • During the years 1892-4 he did once make the attempt, and wrote an opera *Guntram* which is full of beautiful music. It had, however, little success. Strauss later recognized where his mistake lay. In the garden of his house at Garmisch stands a tomb-stone with the inscription "Here lies the noble and virtuous youth Guntram, Minnesinger, who was cruelly done to death by the symphonic orchestra of his own father. May he rest in peace!"

It was only after he had written *Ein Heldenleben* that he found a text for a one act opera, which also had strongly autobiographical elements. The new opera was *Feuersnot*. The text, by Ernst von Wolzogen, is a very blunt comedy in which the people of Munich are ridiculed because they drove out the great sorcerer, Richard Wagner. In vain, however, since he had a successor, Strauss himself, who now punishes them. The music of this opera is among the best that Strauss wrote at this period. It is always inspired and the sound of the orchestra is extremely beautiful. If, in spite of this, the opera was not a great success, the blame rests with the libretto which has no real dramatic climax, and which is frankly obscene. But Strauss had found the way to opera and created a style for himself which is his own. The period of the symphonic poems was at an end. In 1903 came the *Sinfonia domestica* which Strauss performed first in America, and in 1905 *Salome*.

It is hard to realize to-day what an influence this work had. I still remember clearly how I once visited Schönberg, and saw the piano score open at the first page on his table. Schönberg who at that time was already working on his *Chamber Symphony* was filled with amazement at the harmonies of the opening of the opera, and said that it would be twenty years before it would be possible to explain them theoretically.

The story of the origin of *Salome* is well known. A poet, Anton Lindner, drew Strauss' attention to Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and began to translate it in verse. Strauss tried to set it to music, but made no progress. He took up Wilde's version in a German translation to try to discover what was hindering him. He opened the book and read the first sentence "How beautiful is the princess Salome to-night!"—and he began to set the original to music. This

lightning-flash of inspiration which the first sentence of Wilde's work gave him may account for the fact that the opera begins without an overture, a device which he also used in his next opera *Elektra*.

Never before had action of this kind been seen on the operatic stage; nor music of such breathtaking intensity heard there, while the perfection of the ending, with the unexpected sequence of chords which lead from C# major to C minor, has even at the present day lost none of its effect.

*Salome* established Strauss' fame as an opera composer. He was completely the master of his technique when he decided to set Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* to music and applied to the poet for his consent to the plan, and for certain changes to be made in the work to fit it for the stage. The period of the collaboration of Strauss and Hofmannsthal is covered by a correspondence, part of which was published in 1926. It is clear from the first letters that Hofmannsthal tried to dissuade Strauss from making his *Elektra* into an opera and recommended him to take a new plot, which he was anxious to treat as a libretto, *Semiramis* (of which Hofmannsthal's detailed sketches remain). But Strauss wanted to compose *Elektra* first and therefore *Semiramis* was set aside. Hofmannsthal set to work on the alterations that Strauss needed in *Elektra* and did not return to *Semiramis* until later.

This short essay is not the place for a discussion of the status and significance of Hofmannsthal, the greatest poet in the German language since the death of Grillparzer. Yet, whoever reads the correspondence between the poet and the musician will realize that it was an unusual co-operation. Starting as the attraction of one artist to another, the attraction of the musician to the poet, it became more and more a case of Hofmannsthal's influence on Strauss. Hofmannsthal understood, with a clarity which is only granted to genius, the strength and the weaknesses of Strauss, and forced him to compose that material which he knew was best suited to Strauss' personality.

In the second letter to Strauss dated 4th June, 1908, Hofmannsthal wrote that he was working on a comedy after Casanova—it was *Christinas Heimreise*—intended for the theatre not the opera house, and that Strauss could then decide what alterations he wanted made for the opera. He did not want to have to think about the music from the beginning of the "lyrical formulation of the text".

"Once the comedy was written, had proved itself on the stage and all its figures existed, so to speak, as something real, then one would be bold enough to treat everything very much *en raccourci*. . . . And why, too, abandon a genre which has proved so effective in the case of *Salome* and which will, we must hope, prove effective in the case of *Elektra*."

Meanwhile the work on *Elektra* continued and it was Strauss who had the idea of a point of rest after the first outcry of *Elektra*, "Orest!" He asked Hofmannsthal to write some lines for the recognition of Orestes; when he received them he expressed his admiration thus, "You are a born librettist, in my eyes the greatest compliment, for I consider it far more difficult to write a good libretto than a good play".

In order to show clearly how Hofmannsthal worked I shall first quote the passage as it was in the play:

ELEKTRA (*schreit auf*): Orest!

OREST (*feieberhaft*): Wenn einer dich im Haus gehört hat, der hat jetzt mein Leben in der Hand!

ELEKTRA (*ganz leise, bebend*): Es rührt sich niemand. O lass deine Augen mich sehen! Nein du sollst mich nicht berühren!

In the libretto this became:

ELEKTRA (*aufschreiend*): Orest!

[38 bars of the most exciting music.]

(*ganz leise, bebend*)

Orest! Orest! Orest!

Es rührt sich niemand. O lass deine Augen mich sehen.

Traumbild, mir geschenktes Traumbild,

Schöner als alle Träume.

Hehres, unbegreifliches, erhabenes Gesicht,

O bleib bei mir! Lös' nicht in Luft dich auf,

Vergeh mir nicht, es sei denn,

dass ich jetzt gleich sterben muss,

und du dich anzeigst und mich holen kommst,

dann sterb ich seliger als ich gelebt.

Orest! Orest! Orest!—

Nein, du darfst mich nicht umarmen!

The success of *Elektra* was even greater than that of *Salome*. From the first bar the tragic atmosphere was felt, and up to the entry of Orestes there was no moment in the opera in which the tension slackened. Yet I have always felt that the dance of Elektra at the end fails to rise in intensity above her first great monologue. This monologue is conceived on so great a scale, it seems to me, that here Strauss must have disregarded Hofmannsthal's conception of the work as a single great *crescendo*. In the play this first monologue is spoken in a subdued manner, softly and hastily. Elektra "like a sleepwalker" calls up Agamemnon from Hades. She wishes to see him, or at least his shade, and when her sister Chrysothemis enters from the house she is terrified because she fears that she has betrayed her summons to her father.

In the opera it is an emphatic, terrifying invocation which ends in a solemn dance, instead of in the vision of a dance after she has decided upon the murder of Aegisthos and Klytemnestra.

During the composition of *Elektra* the correspondence about "the comedy", that is *Christinas Heimreise*, continued. But Strauss made objections to the story. Suddenly he received a letter from Hofmannsthal, from Weimar, dated 11th February, 1909, telling him that he had finished the scenario of a "Spieloper", and wanted to discuss it with him. This is the first information we have about *Rosenkavalier*; Strauss was enchanted by the first scenes he received shortly afterwards.

In the music of *Rosenkavalier* Strauss was able to express the best side of his genius. He was not called upon to do anything of which he was not fully capable. The text forced him to keep a sense of proportion and to keep both

humour and pathos within bounds. To keep the acting well balanced must also be the task of the producer. In an epilogue to *Rosenkavalier* Hofmannsthal wrote:

"The music is loving without limit and unites everything. Ochs is not cold-shouldered by it. It understands what is behind him, and his faun's visage and the boy's visage of Rofrano are only alternating but related masks from which the same eyes look out."

The next result of the collaboration of Hofmannsthal and Strauss was *Ariadne auf Naxos*, originally conceived as a "30 minute opera", a *divertissement* which was to have been inserted in Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. Everyone knows its history. The 30 minute opera became a long one-act opera and the incidental music to the Molière was made into long orchestral pieces, so that from a short comedy with incidental music and a *divertissement* grew a full sized opera which could be performed by itself.

At the first performance on 25th October, 1912, in Stuttgart the short pauses planned by Strauss and Hofmannsthal were lengthened into an interval of an hour owing to a reception by the King of Württemberg, with the result that the public and the critics found the work too long. It is usually assumed that it was this fact that led to the revision of the work and the addition of a prologue, and to the separation of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* from *Ariadne*.

The correspondence gives no clue to the real reasons for the second version of *Ariadne auf Naxos*. But Hofmannsthal once told me that Zerbinetta, to whom Strauss had given a long coloratura aria, had given him the impression of a mere musical automaton, a doll who could not possibly awaken any feeling in the spectator. It was for that reason that he wrote the prologue with the scene between Zerbinetta and the young composer, in order to create a figure capable of some human warmth, "like Philine in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*". It was through this change that Zerbinetta became a real character in the opera.

Hofmannsthal was proved right. The so-called Vienna version of *Ariadne*, first performed on 7th October, 1917, was so effective that this version has kept its place in the repertory not merely in Vienna but in many German towns up to the present day. It is Strauss' most beautiful and best-sounding opera, tender and light, and the contrast is well maintained between the great lyrical scenes of the main plot and those of the comic figures, in which Zerbinetta, Harlekin, Scaramucchio, Truffaldino and Brighella interfere in the action.

The most enchanting scene, however, that Strauss ever wrote is that between Zerbinetta and the composer in the prologue, in which, for a moment, their love flames out, and especially beautiful is the music to the ecstatic exclamation of the composer, "Was ist Musik? Musik ist eine heilige Kunst—zu versammeln alle Arten von Mut wie Cherubim um einen strahlenden Tron!"

### III

Between the first and second versions of *Ariadne* lies the composition of the ballet *Die Josephslegende* and of the opera *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. It is understandable that Strauss was attracted to write for the Russian ballet, which

at this time often visited Paris and also performed in other cities, but he was not endowed with the rhythmical imagination to create anything which could compete with the ballets of the Russian and French composers.

*Die Frau ohne Schatten*, on the other hand, is an outstanding work, which made a strong impression at its first performance in Vienna on 10th October, 1919. Since *Rosenkavalier* the style of Strauss' music had become simpler, the dazzling harmonies are lacking, but his lyrical invention developed itself with increasing richness.

When he wrote *Die Frau ohne Schatten* Hofmannsthal had the vision of a kind of *Zauberflöte*. The Emperor and the Empress correspond to Tamino and Pamina, the dyer and his wife to Papageno and Papagena, people who belong to the material world. As in *Zauberflöte* there is a change to a higher kind of life. In *Die Frau ohne Schatten* this is brought about through the willingness of the Empress to deny her other-world origin, and to share in the life of mankind with its sorrows and necessities. The music has unusual warmth in the dyer's scenes, to whom Strauss gave some of his own characteristics. The song of the two watchmen at the end of the first act is, in its simple, almost popular melody, one of the most expressive tunes the composer ever wrote. The monologue of the Empress when she admits her guilt before her father, the Spirit King, also has real greatness. But the final quartet in which the voices of the four chief figures of the opera are joined has not the finality that is to be desired, the finality which the trio in *Rosenkavalier* at the end of the third act achieves so completely.

It can be said that the action is too complicated. Later Hofmannsthal made out of this libretto one of the most beautiful tales since Goethe's *Das Märchen*: a justification, perhaps, for those who consider the plot of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* unsuitable for an opera.

In December, 1919, Richard Strauss became Director of the Vienna Opera, a post he held for ten years. It was another brilliant period for this opera house, for such performances had not been given since the days of Mahler. One can easily understand that at this time an estrangement grew up between Strauss and Hofmannsthal. For the poet, the world in which he had grown up had come to an end, he felt uprooted and concentrated on his own work. Strauss, on the other hand, enjoyed the almost daily confirmation of his fame as conductor and composer.

Now he tried, assisted by a Viennese playwright, Hermann Bahr, to write the text for a light comedy of middle-class life, again strongly autobiographical, and the result was *Intermezzo*. He also made another attempt at the ballet, and composed *Schlagobers*. Neither work is particularly inspired, nor had more than a lukewarm reception. Strauss consequently approached Hofmannsthal again for a new libretto. The result was *Die Ägyptische Helena*, an opera in two acts. No better material for a lyrical opera could be imagined; Hofmannsthal read the libretto to a circle of friends before he sent it to Strauss, and we were convinced that the combination of tragedy and comedy could not fail to produce a perfect opera. In the first act, indeed, Strauss is completely successful. The music to the awakening of Helen in the palace of the nymph



Aïtra is unforgettable. In the second act, however, which needs sharp contrasts, Strauss does not fully live up to the greatness of the action. Here the libretto is undoubtedly superior to the music in which Strauss repeats himself. Nevertheless, the opera is an interesting work and a great advance on everything which lies between it and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Strauss' letters to Hofmannsthal in 1927 and 1928 are full of suggestions, the most interesting being that they should write a kind of *Meistersinger*. None of these ideas however materialized. Hofmannsthal's letters are not available to me, but from Strauss' one can see that this idea later on took shape in the *Capriccio* for which Clemens Krauss wrote the libretto.

The last of Strauss' operas for which Hofmannsthal wrote the libretto is *Arabella*, a comedy set in the middle of the nineteenth century. The day after he had sent the third act to Strauss, Hofmannsthal died.

*Arabella* recapitulates the melodies which had so charmed the audience in *Rosenkavalier*, and it is incomprehensible that this opera is not more often performed. It marks the end of the great period of opera in Strauss' creative life, and nothing shows more clearly how important for his inspiration really excellent poetry was, than a comparison of the operas which were written in collaboration with Hofmannsthal and those which Strauss wrote with other librettists.

*Die schweigsame Frau*, whose text was by Stefan Zweig, would certainly have become a constant part of the repertory under normal circumstances, but the last operas, *Friedenstag*, *Daphne*, *Capriccio* and *Die Liebe der Danaë*, show a loss of inspiration which is due not to the age of the composer, but to the libretti. In the *Schweigsame Frau*, which is well adapted by Stefan Zweig from Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*, Strauss gives up writing cantilenas in the style which he had developed since *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and introduces real coloratura, as the following example shows:

Ex. 2



This type of coloratura is anticipated in the songs, op. 68 and 69. It is well suited to Zweig's idea that the returning nephew is bringing an Italian opera troupe to the house of his uncle Morose, among them his wife who is to play the role of the silent woman. There are some amusing scenes. Considered as a whole, however, the opera lacks any climax which can be compared with those of *Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne* and *Arabella*.

But what of a few debatable points in the works of the composer's old age, in such a large output, stretching over more than sixty years of unbroken composition? What does not entirely satisfy us to-day may appeal to a future



generation. Those of Strauss' works which are to-day performed outside his native country are, taken together, more than the total output of most composers, and we must not forget that in his own country almost all his works are regularly performed.

He was the last survival of an age in which great artists were at the centre of a nation's spiritual life. He was famous so early that he played a dominating part in the musical life of the world throughout almost a whole lifetime. He lived through the changes which this last war brought with it, and, in his old age, still created works which show a last flaring up of his genius. He went on conducting almost to the end of his life. The orchestra he loved most was the Vienna Philharmonic. When for the last time he had conducted a rehearsal he said, "What a pity, gentlemen, that I cannot take you with me to my grave. How good it would be to go on making music there". Shortly before his death he wanted to compose another symphonic poem, *Die Donau*, for this orchestra. But it did not go well, and he sent a page of the score to the President of the Orchestra with the inscription, "a few drops from the exhausted source of the Danube". With that, he took leave of music and of life.

### Book Review

*The Score*. Editor: William Glock. No. 1, August, 1949. Pp. 49. (I.T. Publications.) 5s. (Thrice yearly.)

Henry Boys' exceptionally thoughtful "Stravinsky: Critical Categories Needed for a Study of his Music" must both stimulate and enervate every thinker. The article wants to "clear the ground" and be, "I am afraid, philosophical"; we are yet more afraid that by muddling the ground it assumes a philosophical appearance. "The content of the music, its sense, is nothing else than the sense of the form contemplated; or, as is said, form and content are identical." However suggestive, this is not philosophical; it is wrong if "form" and "content" are assumed to mean different things, and strictly meaningless if they aren't. Douglas Newton's reflections on "The Composer and the Music of Poetry" are unmusical, while Edmond Appia's naive "Aesthetics of Ornamentation in French Classical Music" and G. F. Kosuszek's useful piece on "Boris Blacher" should have been "subbed", for the former's music examples are unnumbered, and the latter tells of variations on a Paganini theme without disclosing what they are written for; nor does Mr. Kosuszek mention the *Partita* for strings and percussion,\* one of the few Blacher works the English musician may have heard. Westrup's "Monteverdi and the Madrigal" would have lost nothing of its value if he had renounced his somewhat facile sneer at the text-books' joy over the *début* of the unprepared dominant seventh in Monteverdi, and the whole issue would have gained if instead of the reprint of Hindemith's (elsewhere available) "Introduction" to *The Craft of Musical Composition* something new as well as good had appeared. The reprint does, however, remind us that a great musical mind may indulge in elementarily false reasoning without anybody noticing anything amiss: "... the dividing point between conscious and unconscious work can be raised to an extraordinary degree. If this were not true, everyone in whom this point lies at a very low level could assert that he is creating the greatest works of art". *Non sequitur*.

Judging from the announcement of the second issue's contents, the publication may prove important.

H. K.

\* See MUSIC REVIEW, X/1, February, 1949, pp. 40 ff.

## *Fiddlesticks*

BY

F. BONAVIA

THE late Professor Carl Flesch published in his lifetime many volumes on the technique of violin playing much appreciated by students as by others who profess an interest in the subject. But he has written a still more important volume which, as far as I know, has not yet been published and which dealt with the changes that have taken place in style and technique and included criticism of distinguished colleagues. Kreisler (who had been a fellow-student of Flesch in the class of Massart) heard of it and asked Flesch to be allowed to read passages which concerned himself. Flesch refused; he was determined that his comments should only be read after his death. Why? The only possible explanation I can put forward is that the professor dealt even justice to all and was afraid that out-spoken remarks might hurt the feelings of a race said to prefer flattery to plain, wholesome truth.

I shall not attempt to anticipate Flesch's criticism of his contemporaries. But anyone who has followed the development of violin technique in the last forty years or so must admit that changes have taken place, some of them so radical in nature as to alter the performer's outlook. Let us begin with the admission that the standard of technique is higher than it ever was and that orchestral players can now play music which, before the advent of the Sevcik school, was reserved for soloists. That is undoubtedly a gain, but as generally happens there are also losses to off-set the gain. To possess a technique that enables the violinist to play accurately great concertos is, no doubt, very desirable. But in order to interest others in the performance of a great classic, something more than technique is necessary—musical intelligence to interpret correctly the composer's thought and temperament—this alone can give the performance warmth and character. In this respect, I fear, there has been no progress. On the contrary, the standard is lower than it was in the days when Joachim and Ysaye and Brodsky trained violinists the way they should go. Phrases are now twisted and perverted by eminent soloists in a way that an earlier generation would never have tolerated.

The first exponent of the new technique was the Czech, Jan Kubelik, whose dexterity astounded his generation. He was the first to tackle the whole Paganini repertory with success. There was never a flaw in his playing of the *Caprices* or the *Campanella* and we understood then how these musically unimportant compositions could thrill the public when to the Kubelik technique was added the fiery temper of the Italian player. Kubelik kept usually to the virtuoso repertory, but occasionally strayed outside—not very successfully. In a Beethoven *Romanze* for instance his phrasing was by no means reasonable. It passed muster because one accepted it as the shortcoming of one who did not claim to be more than a virtuoso. Unfortunately to-day violinists who have nothing like Kubelik's technique are even more careless where phrasing and

bowing are concerned. Not very long ago a violinist who played in the Brahms double Concerto at the Albert Hall startled us by very peculiar phrasing. The slow movement begins with a phrase of six notes which always have been, and are obviously meant to be played in one bow. He used two. When the phrase appears for the first time he divided it into a group of two and one of four notes; later he divided it into two even groups of three notes. Now this may seem a small matter. But the language of music has its punctuation marks which must be observed if the sense of the period is to be conveyed to the listener. Changing the bow at the wrong moment made complete nonsense of Brahms' line. It was as absurd as reading a piece of prose or a poem putting full stops and commas every five or six words. The outcome was equally nonsensical. Next to me there happened to be sitting an eminent violinist who has himself played the Concerto in public many times. "We", he said, "used to play it in one bow, but if it had been X (he mentioned a very popular soloist) he would have taken six". X would probably have taken six bows for the six notes. The modern virtuoso whose fee is ten times as high as that of his predecessor neither knows nor cares. He has his public; nothing else matters.

The Albert Hall violinist was no doubt induced to change the bowing because his tone, polished but somewhat weak, was unequal to the occasion—a common failing. Tone to-day has nothing like the richness it had when the violin was in the hand of the older masters. It has been said that exceptional dexterity of the left hand in the modern virtuoso prevents him from developing tone. I thought so once myself. But English players like Albert Sammons or the late Arthur Catterall combined a very enviable and reliable technique of the left hand with a very powerful tone. It seems more likely that bowing is no longer considered as important as it was in other times.

Violin tone is, in the main, rather thin these days, partly no doubt owing to the wire string which has now almost entirely superseded the gut string. Wire, once considered good enough only for such instruments as the mandoline, has its advantages. It lasts very much better than gut and is, accordingly, cheaper. But being very much thinner and more tightly stretched, it cannot vibrate as the gut string did and cannot be controlled as firmly since the surface it offers to the tip of the finger is smaller. No doubt it has come to stay, but tone suffers.

Another cause of anaemic tone is the curious partiality of modern players for the upper part of the bow, and the reluctance to use its full length. Even in piano passages the full bow lightly drawn across the strings produces a sound that is both soft and resonant, while short length robs it of resonance. It is not difficult to see how fatal to anything like reasonable balance is thin string tone in an orchestra. For while the violin has lost brilliance and power, all or most other instruments have gained power—German horns have replaced French horns; metal flutes have greater sonority than wood instruments; trumpets and trombones have enriched their tone to meet the demand of romantic music; the modern concert piano is a match for the full orchestra. The violin, once the king of the orchestra, has been dethroned. Conductors

to secure volume have at times suggested alterations in bowing that completely alter the sense of the phrase. One such passage occurs in the orchestral *tutti* of the *Emperor* Concerto. It consists of nothing more than the notes of the common chord which should be played—to conform to Beethoven's directions—in one bow. The conductor, wanting greater resonance, insisted on two bows. He got the resonance but the phrase lost its character, becoming commonplace and, indeed, alien to the nature of the episode, since, when assigned to other instruments, it still retains its original character.

The soloist too has lost some of his power through weakness of tone. I do not refer here to the half dozen violinists of world-wide fame but to the lesser practitioners who are infinitely more numerous. One tragic case I have known of a young violinist whose technique was first class and who seemed destined to great things but failed simply because he was mostly inaudible in the concert room. When you heard him in a small room you were charmed and convinced; in the concert room his best tricks—his staccato, his springing bowing—could not be heard and were consequently ineffective. After a couple of recitals he disappeared. I wonder what has happened to him. A failure as a soloist, he was not the kind of player a conductor would welcome in the orchestra where the ability to produce a round, full tone is much more valuable than the ability to play double harmonics.

Another feature in solo playing to-day that, to say the least, is not encouraging is the uniformity of style. When Ysaye, Sarasate and Joachim reigned it would have been impossible for the least experienced to mistake the one for the other. To-day there is still a difference between players but it is not very striking; the style has no longer a personal stamp. One may perform certain feats in a more polished manner than another, the attitude of one player may be more impersonal than another's, but the pleasure we derive from their performances is not very different. It may even happen that a less famous player will arouse greater interest than one whose fee reaches the fabulous figure of 700 guineas. Some of us have listened to a violinist, more highly paid than any violinist has ever been, and admired his finished technique; but no one was thrilled; no member of the audience cheered with the vigour that was common enough in other times. Yet that audience, which had paid exceptionally high prices for admittance, had come determined to find everything good and to acclaim with equal warmth a concerto or the unconsidered trifles "arranged"—somehow—by the player. Admiration was aroused—deep and sincere; enthusiasm there was none.

Famous and some not-quite-famous violinists blunt the point of their style by an abuse of *portamento*—a very old dodge which these musicians share with sentimental tenors. The sliding up to a note is almost unnoticeable in a great performer; in the less expert it is objectionable and often a sign of questionable taste.

*Portamento* is not a new discovery; but the older players used it sparingly and controlled it severely. Their successors abuse it with lamentable results. It has not been discovered so far whether it began when an untutored apprentice crawled along the string to discover the whereabouts of a high note or as an

imitation of lamenting animals. Applied to music it substitutes sentimentality for sentiment and is accordingly favoured by Hawaiian bandsmen, crooners, etc. Like the inevitable *vibrato* it is as redoubtable a leveller as death, for it imposes emotional expression of a certain type on to everything irrespective of age and character. Let me add that there are at present in England and abroad artists who follow saner traditions to whom these remarks can never apply. It may also be that the breaking up of a phrase or the imposition of *vibrato* do not affect the music of composers who have forgotten that the violin is essentially a lyrical instrument. But surely older composers—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Elgar—should be treated with some thought for the canons that prevailed in their own day.

## Book Reviews

*Gregorian Chant.* By Jos. Smits van Waesberghe. Symphonia Books. Pp. 64. (Sidgwick & Jackson.) 1949. 7s. 6d.

The author, Professor of Music in the Philosophical Faculty of the Society of Jesus at Nijmegen in Holland, states in the Preface that he has written "in the first place for the non-expert on the subject of church music, and for non-Catholics in particular". The book, however, explains the principles of plainchant and its place in the liturgy so fully that it can be recommended also to those who have some knowledge of plainchant, and have no time to consult a more extensive treatment of the subject. It is well documented by music examples and illustrations. The translation from the Dutch is made by W. A. G. Doyle-Davidson, Professor of English in the University of Nijmegen.

*Il Primo Libro d'Intavolatura di Balli d'Arpicordo di Gio. Maria Radino* (Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique No. 2918), transcribed by Rosamond E. M. Harding. Pp. vi + 75. (Heffer.) 1949. 21s.

Dr. Harding has presented us with a facsimile edition and the transcription of a collection of dances by Giovanni Maria Radino, organist at S. Giovanni di Verdara in Padua, printed by Giacomo Vincenti in Venice in 1592. There exists only one copy of Radino's book, which belonged to Fétis who mentions it in his *Biographie universelle des musiciens*, and is now at the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique at Brussels. It is considered to be the first printed book of harpsichord music "*entirely devoted to the Gravicembalo*" or—as Dr. Harding adds—to the Arpicordo, which was a kind of Gravicembalo, but not identical with it. In the Preface, however, Radino says that the music of his collection of dances can either be performed on the Gravicembalo or the lute. The notation offers no difficulties to the transcriber, since it is the ordinary keyboard notation. It may, however, be pointed out that the system for the right hand consists of five lines, that for the left of eight lines. The dances are Pass'emezo-gagliarda (pp. 1-23), Padoana prima (pp. 27-31), Padoana seconda (pp. 31-38), Gagliarda prima (pp. 38-40), Gagliarda seconda (pp. 40-44), Gagliarda terza (pp. 44-47), Gagliarda quarta (pp. 48-49). The texture is rather crude and would have shocked a musician of the nineteenth century since consecutive fifths are a regular feature of the harmonic progressions. Dr. Harding has carefully amended original misprints in her transcription which is a welcome addition to reprints of early keyboard music.

E. J. W.



## Concerts and Recitals

### FIRST PERFORMANCES\*

#### AND HOW THEY ARE REPORTED

(1) Schönberg, string Trio. (2) P. Racine Fricker, string Quartet in one movement. (3) Peter Wishart, *Cassation* for violin and viola. (4) Arnell, 3rd string Quartet. (5) Turina, *Sonata Pintoressa*: "*Sanlúcar de Barrameda*" for piano. (6) Ivor Walsworth, Piano Sonata. (7) Chopin, *Nocturne*. (8) Norman dello Joio, Variations and Capriccio for violin and piano. (9) Mellers, *3 16th Century Poems* for counter-tenor, flute and guitar. (10) William Wordsworth, *The Fleeting*. (11) Percy Grainger, *Hill Song* No. 1. (12) Gösta Nystroem, *Sinfonia espressiva*. (13) Haydn, 6 Minuets. (14) Prokofiev, 1st Suite from *Cinderella*.

THE first string Trio of Schönberg's maturity, op. 45† of 1946, had to wait about three years for its first European and English performances, and has not yet been published; whereas Messrs. Fricker's and Wishart's chamber-musical efforts of 1948, the former pre-mature and the latter (apart from being grossly insensitive at least at one stage of its tonal structure) skilfully superfluous, were soon printed, and performed on several occasions. They had been recommended by the jury of the Edwin Evans Memorial Prize and were duly eulogized by the press. I would not, at the same time, dream of juxtaposing them with the Schönberg, but for the fact that the *Daily Telegraph* critic (Bonavia) followed up his respectful remarks about them with the spectacular, if not altogether comprehensible observation that the "Schönberg uses all the resources of musical art", and with the priceless judgment that "the outcome is futile", "a shining example of the waste that occurs when the teachings of experience are sacrificed for a fanciful ideology". Still better, I think, was Scott Goddard in the *News Chronicle*, who thus enlarged upon his admiration for the work: "It has the semblance of an assortment of statistics; as it were, the bare bones of a Blue Book". Mr. Goddard's confession that he understood a quarter of the Trio left me wondering why he chose to write about the other three quarters. For in truth the "atonal" composition is informed by such intense feeling as to grow, in places, ecstatic. In recording these gems of "musical" criticism in a musicological journal, I have a secret hope of preserving them for succeeding generations. I am sure one can be an excellent critic without understanding Schönberg. As long, however, as I myself had no emotional access to Schönberg's twelve-tone music I did not write about it, for I knew that I did not understand it. I propose that we—musicians, musicologists, critics—offer this belated birthday present to Schönberg: to shut up in future unless insight bids us speak. So much, it would appear, is his due. On the present occasion, insight was hindered by the London String Trio's performance. Technically superb, the executants seemed, however preconsciously, to act the conviction with which they should have played. It was a bad sign, at any rate, that upon one's first hearing of this difficult work one often noticed decidedly wrong phrasings: would-be passionate scannings which scorned the thematic structures. Nevertheless, anyone able to smell a masterpiece before he understands it must have received an immensely powerful impression. The well-built, well-pleasing Arnell Quartet, on the other hand, was never meant to be powerful. The effect of its tonal development is greatly and, in these days, unusually enhanced by a fine feeling for string quartet sonorities, with (e.g.) the initial, reserved key of E flat major on the one hand and the brilliant or richly lyrical key of its Neapolitan sixth on the other; it is in fact in D major that the Quartet ends. But while the progressive tonality of the whole convinces, that of the first movement does not: the sudden, justifiedly unexpected B major end that tears the tonal trend away from E flat is as good as a joke (something

\* Including first English, London, concert, broadcast performances.

† A detailed analysis of this work, by William Hymanson, will appear in a forthcoming issue of this journal [Ed.].



of which it is perhaps supposed to be): it won't stand repeated listening. If the Turina is a sonata, the "Warsaw Concerto" is a concerto, and if all the added and wrong notes of the Walsworth's vertical inventions were covered up, its horizontal banality and poverty would be laid bare; besides, I thought the time was over when you could hide your stale melodies behind nowise hidden fifths. Melodic invention is what the 17-year-old Chopin's C minor *Nocturne* (his first) has to a surprising, if not of course surpassing degree of individuality. The tune was not, to be sure, to remain individual: it returns in the E minor theme from *Vltava* (though Smetana can hardly have known the *Nocturne*), not to speak of *Hatikvah*, the Jewish anthem. In dello Joio's violin piece, which is in, and never gets out of F major, the siciliana-like variation is the worst, while of the three Mellers songs the siciliana-like is the best. The reviews of these were amusing as well as alarming. The fact that the 3 *Sixteenth Century Poems* for counter-tenor, flute and guitar were misprinted in the programme as "Two Seventeenth Century Poems" with "Recorder and Guitar" posed insoluble problems for *The Times* and *Musical Opinion*. *The Times* got round mentioning the number of songs by saying "some", and round mentioning the accompanying instruments by saying nothing about them. *Musical Opinion* ("C. G.-F.") was bolder: ". . . several seventeenth-century poems, with recorder and guitar accompaniment". Neither the critic of Europe's leading newspaper, then, nor the reviewer for what is supposed to be a leading music journal, were able to tell how many songs, or what woodwind instrument they had heard; in fact *Musical Opinion* mistook the flute for a recorder. Needless to add, both journalists took it upon themselves to criticize the songs. It must at last be generally realized that a distinguished artist's work is liable to receive completely unqualified reviews in publications of authoritative standing; in the present instance a Fleet Street reporter might have done better. Wordsworth's song contains surprisingly little Wordsworth or music, while Percy Grainger's orchestral song (1901-2) solves the problem of how to be repetitive without repetitions. "Getreter Quark wird breit, nicht stark." (Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan*.) What this sort of sauce has to do with a "New Era" Concert Society, Mr. Austin would have to tell us. By far the best orchestral novelty of the quarter was the Swede's 3rd Symphony (1935). Since the BBC did not care to give much musical information about the work, but instead quoted an extra-musical description by a Swedish critic, a few musical impressions may be appropriate. The first movement, for strings and tamps (*cf.* Blacher's *Partita* for strings and percussion), is a successful hybrid of passacaglia and sectional variations, with each appearance of the melodic theme in B flat minor. The sombre scherzo in the latter's dominant (minor, to begin with) shows more than a spot of atonalism. Scherzos in tonal works lend themselves easily to "atonal" treatment: even Arthur Benjamin grows "atonal" in the scherzo of his Symphony. In Wellesz' 5th Quartet the scherzo is twelve-tonal, while in Schönberg's own 2nd Chamber Symphony in E flat minor the scherzo-like rondo in G major is the least tonal part. As turning-point of the total tonal arch, the scherzo is obviously glad to let rhythmic and harmonic tension co-operate; besides, strong rhythm will even for the most tonal of listeners furnish part of the hold which they are losing harmonically. Nystroem's slow movement is again a passacaglia, this time almost a proper one, with the C minor ostinato G-c-d-e $\flat$ -d-c-d-G first in the basses, later in the trombones and eventually, climactically, upstairs. Finally, however, the *ostinato* ceases; a critical moment, last solved by Britten in the concert version of the *Grimes* Passacaglia. Nor does Nystroem fail, but on the contrary achieves a similarly moving moment as Honegger in the middle movement of his *Liturgique*, at the point where he abandons the *ostinato*  $\frac{3}{4}$  rhythm. How far Nystroem has met his self-imposed challenge of this similar formal approach to the first and third movements I should not like to say upon a single, interrupted hearing on a rotten radio, nor do I know yet whether the last movement, following the slow one *attacca* in a well-prepared G minor  $\rightarrow$  major, solves the modern last-movement problem. It attempts the solution by nowise unexpected means, *i.e.* (a) fugue, and (b) basing the subject on the slow movement's *ostinato*. The final G major cadence achieves unusual effects with usual devices—added 6th and minor turns (B $\flat$ -A-B $\flat$ , B $\flat$ -A-B $\flat$ ) in the basses. Of the Haydn Minuets (1776; discovered 1940) the third in G major, for strings only, is

the best. The Prokofiev is in every respect the opposite of the Schönberg: not just in musical genre and instrumental medium; cultural background and musical language; historical significance and market appeal; but also, alas, in value. H. K.

### THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

BLOCH CONCERT: 13TH OCTOBER

TCHAIKOVSKY CONCERT: 10TH NOVEMBER

A FULL programme of the works of Bloch was as welcome as it is rare, particularly as the *Sacred Service* formed the principal item. But the composer, who conducted, has an unfortunate, retrospective technique on the rostrum which frequently played havoc with everyone's good intentions. Gradually, however, one became used to seeing climaxes conducted after they had occurred and partially at least one overcame this peculiar distraction. Rothmüller sang magnificently in the *Sacred Service*, but Zara Nelsova brought insufficient strength to the solo part in *Schelomo*. The concert began shakily with the *Symphonic Suite*.

Malko's Tchaikovsky was an expanse of gloom barely relieved except by Gioconda de Vito's superb performance of the violin Concerto. He is obviously a musician of skill and discernment, but lacks utterly the element of showmanship essential to the first class conductor.

On the basis of these two concerts the London Philharmonic Orchestra has deteriorated from the standard achieved with van Beinum last season. By the time these notes appear he will have returned and will, no doubt, take matters in hand. G. N. S.

### CHOPIN CENTENARY

OP. 28

ASKENASE

Third Programme, 21st October

HEARING the *diminuendo* in place of the 12th Prelude's first "*crescendo*", or the *ritardando* in No. 4's "*stretto*", or perhaps even the *p(p)* (instead of *f*) end of No. 5, Chopin's spirit did not remember that Chopin had commanded otherwise. Other liberties, however, were phantastic rather than imaginative: the total neglect of the first two of No. 10's three accents on third beats; a left-hand *rubato* enlarging pleonastically on No. 4's progressions, or changing No. 13's  $\frac{6}{4}$  into  $\frac{12}{8}$ ; the right-hand *rubato* making of No. 15's bar 15/4 what should be reserved for bar 17/4; the anacoluthon produced by the monstrous break before, and bump on, No. 14's last note; No. 20's unmitigated noise which made the *cresc.* impossible; the disregard, indeed contradiction of the important *decrecendo* in No. 24's bar 21, or of bar 48/5-6's rhythm. Against these sporadic shortcomings there was much latent and some potent greatness, e.g. in the wholly healthy organisms of Nos. 6 and 22 (if we overlook the, as it were, sub-clinical infection of the latter's left-hand accents); the *leggermente* of No. 3, to which extant descriptions of Chopin's own playing seemed to apply; or in the build-up of No. 7, both unaffected and unashamed, the *c''* sharp climax being followed by a generous though not extravagant pause and a sweet but pure *Abgesang*. Among more isolated beauties there were such things as the exceptionally understanding rendering of the none too dynamic accent that shows No. 2's *dimin.* phrase its way. Has anybody employed by the BBC ever had his ears tested? As distinct from a tuned string instrument, a tuned piano will always prove a noticeable advantage. H. K.

### BBC SYMPHONY CONCERT

ALBERT HALL, 26TH OCTOBER

RAFAEL KUBELIK is an extremely sensitive conductor with a highly developed poetic mind. His *Symphonie Fantastique* was marked by as beautiful a rendering of the *Scène*

*aux champs* as I can remember; without undue stress he made you feel that this movement is the greatest homage to Beethoven ever paid by genius (the "thunder" at the close corresponding to the "birds" in the *Pastoral*). His reserve at the start of the whole was deliberate, for he intended the highest dynamics for the march and finale, and though I have heard more brilliant (e.g. by the old Colonne orchestra) renderings of *Un Bal*, I have never heard one in which the descending scale of A major in its *coda* was more clearly brought out. The romantic soul of Berlioz came through, not merely his orchestral colour and musical science. Martinů's *La Bagarre*, that opened the programme, seemed almost *vieux jeu* by comparison, and one wondered how Sir Arnold Bax' early *Bank Holiday Overture*, that covers much the same ground, would have sounded after it. It may have been due to my seat, well on the right of the performer, that Ida Haendel's delivery of Brahms' violin Concerto seemed to lack sonority and abandon (if that term is possible in the case of Brahms) in its *rondo*, though she was not overweighted by the orchestra.

E. H. W. M.

#### EXPLORATORY CONCERT SOCIETY

FRANZ REIZENSTEIN

Queen Mary Hall, 3rd November

It is a pity that the concerts of this courageous Society are not better attended. Reizenstein's exploratory programme comprised two little known classical works (Mendelssohn's *Fantasia* in F sharp minor, op. 28, Mozart's *Suite in the style of Handel*, K. 399), a group of his own compositions, and Hindemith's monumental *Ludus tonalis*. Reizenstein's intelligent, reliable, and—apparently against an intractable piano—brilliant playing made a good show of the lively sections of the Mendelssohn, while fittingly understating its maudlin passages. Subtle musical imagination was at work in the *Allemande* of the Mozart suite and in, amongst others, fugues 6, 9 and 10 of the Hindemith, which altogether was conceived and executed with strong architectural purpose. But the fugue of the Mozart was hurried, and so were most of the quick fugues of *Ludus* when compared with Hindemith's indications. Since, however, the metronome-marks of Hindemith's piano music are notorious for "feeling slow", Reizenstein may have acted deliberately, only to be thwarted by the acoustics of the place. There is nothing to be said against rounding off Mozart's unfinished K. 399 (in C major) with that small, hard diamond of perfection, the *Gigue* in G (K. 574), except what the intervening Köchel numbers say for themselves. While the *Allemande* and *Courante* of the *Suite* (1782) are genuine Mozart, the *Fuga* witnesses that uneasy struggle with baroque counterpoint which was to become so fruitful in the *Gigue* of 1789.

Reizenstein's own compositions are rich in truly pianistic sonorities, and have great charm of invention and felicitous detail. The "Sonetto" (1949) employs a smooth, 4-note motif in order continuously to slip out of its tonic, B minor, by way of good false cadences. "Intermezzo" (1941) is remarkable for the ease with which a fey 9/8 lilt is varied, broken up and re-established. The "Scherzo in A" (1947), though based on rather undistinguished ideas, proves a brilliantly effective, and also well-shaped, piano-piece.

P. H.

#### BARYLLI QUARTET

WIGMORE HALL, 5TH NOVEMBER

The salient characteristic of the Barylli Quartet is an extreme smoothness and sweetness of tone. In Schubert's early E flat Quartet the voice of the first violin seemed almost purposely attenuated to suggest youthful modesty; the perfect intonation of the cello in the trio was noteworthy. In Hindemith's op. 22, which starts as if he were trying to put the first movement of Beethoven's op. 131 out of action with a number from *Die Kunst der Fuge*, their balance and finish could not destroy the grey tedium which develops as the work progresses. The contrasting moods in the Andante of Brahms' op. 51, No. 2, were exquisitely rendered. Those who were slow in leaving the hall were rewarded by a performance of Wolf's *Italian Serenade* enchanting in freshness and restraint.

E. H. W. M.

## BERYL HATT

ACC. MOORE

Wigmore Hall, 7th November

THIS young soprano impressed the Editor in a student performance of *Don Giovanni* about 2 years ago. Meanwhile she seems to have fulfilled the promises she then held out: vocally accomplished, she is amazingly adult musically. In Mahler's "Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?!", for instance (No. 4 from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, as the programme would not know), she sang both semiquaver sections with overwhelming clarity of both feeling and execution, introducing the concluding period via a wonderfully organic oneness of an agogic and a dynamic suspension. In point of fact only Peter Pears has, to my knowledge, shown a maturer insight into the song. Miss Hatt's programme was sensitively constructed, except for the third group, where three F sharp minors—Scarlatti's "O cessate di piagarmi", Gluck's "O del mio dolce ardor", and Monteverdi's "Lasciatemi morire"—were thrown together, the first two being, moreover, similar in thematic build. Otherwise, enjoyment was only marred by her voice becoming hard when high, and (probably owing to nervousness) slightly flat at nodi. If she improves, we shall run to her future appearances; we shall also go if she doesn't.

H. K.

## AEOLIAN QUARTET

QUEEN MARY HALL, 9TH NOVEMBER

ARNOLD COOKE's piano Quartet is a typical English student work à la Schumann-Brahms, tuneful but derivative; the first movements of the former's D minor Trio and the latter's fourth Symphony seemed to preside over the start, just as the opening theme of Schumann's piano Quintet roared out of the last page of the *rondo* and the scherzo had affinities to that in his piano Quartet; the slow movement evoked a *Londonderry Air* type of wistfulness. The piano does not overbalance the strings. Alan Richardson's viola Sonata is uninspired and jogtrot throughout. It was not wise to play it before Martin's alert and *felt* Sonatina for two violins and piano. The pianist was Alan Richardson. The concert concluded with op. 130 with the *Grosse Fuge* as finale. Unless the repeat in the first movement is kept when the work is given in this form, the last shred of proportion vanishes. The present critic is one of those who think that the substituted finale was as wise a procedure here as the substituted central movement in the *Waldstein*. One can see what was intended by the fugal finale, a variant of a long Handelian Gigue to close a set of quasi-suite movements; but the splendid thing is rather an overture than a finale, while the other ending, with its slight suggestion of a homage to Haydn, maintains thematic relationship to the rest less obtrusively. This Quartet has given better renderings of the earlier movements, with more mystery (e.g.) in the alternations of *f* and *p* in the first.

E. H. W. M.

## 62ÈME CONCERT DE MUSIQUE FRANCAISE

QUATUOR PASCAL

Roussel—Rivier—Ravel

Wigmore Hall, 17th November

THE first two movements of the D major Roussel are thick. "Pauses are never bad" holds the greatest living Viennese, and to a student he (Schönberg) said: "You know, this piece is really an octet—you need four men to play, and four to turn the pages. There are no pauses!" Though the D minor → major scherzo's texture comes as a relief in that it lets the thick air out, it did not altogether convince me either. Mellers<sup>1</sup> writes of the *Poème de la Forêt's* "exquisite placing of sonorities and timbres". An unrelenting admirer

<sup>1</sup> Mellers, W., "Albert Roussel and La Musique Française", in *Studies in Contemporary Music*, 1947.

of Roussel would probably speak in similar terms of that G major trio where the cello, overlapping with the others, climbs about near the regions of the eternal resin. Maybe this is an experiment in sonorities, in which case it all depends on whether you like your experiments in the showroom or the workshop. Mellers suggests that "the long list of compositions written . . . during the nineteen-thirties . . . manifests no falling off from mastery . . .". I wish he had substantiated this remark with regard to the present work. Does he really think that it is a masterly quartet, that it has been conceived in terms of its medium? The finale, by the way, lands in the middle section of the 2nd Borodin Quartet's *Notturmo*.

After his *Rhapsodie provençale*, Jean Rivier's F major Quartet comes as a disappointment, expected, to be sure, in view of the genre's incomparably greater formal and textural problems. The work recalls a recent remark of Redlich's<sup>a</sup>: "He should try to emulate the shining example of Brahms, who destroyed approximately 20 string quartets before he published his first . . . at the mature age of 40". Built on a modernized model of a classical tonal arch (tonic-dominant-tonic, with the first movement ending in the dominant, i.e. the middle movement's key), the Quartet does not show any modern equivalents of classical virtues. Its awkward texture indulges, urchin-like, in consecutives for their own sake, in unmotivated strict chordal style and embarrassing octave unisons. The empty slow movement has no *raison d'être*. At the same time the work makes one wish to hear more of its composer, though not, for the time being, quartets.

The level of performance was unusually high.

H. K.

#### BBC SYMPHONY CONCERT

C. SARGENT, WITH ROSTAL

Berlioz: Overture, *Benvenuto Cellini*; Bartók: Violin Concerto; Sibelius: Symphony No. 1  
Albert Hall, 23rd November

SOME modern works become more significant, others more beautiful on repeated hearing: the Bartók does both. The composer's unique mixture of simplicity and learning, of colour and counterpoint, of ebullience and insinuation, suits Rostal's style to the last, and I have no hesitation in calling him the greatest living exponent of the work. His performance was memorable for easily surmounting the horrifying difficulties of the score, yet never for a moment did it sound slick. In perhaps no other concerto is the soloist so often called upon to set the mood of a new section (see 1st mov., bars 22, 56, 73, 115, 160, etc., each variation of the 2nd mov., last movement, bars 5, 93, 165, etc.). At all these points, Rostal's assured authority succeeded in conveying to a helpful conductor and a wide-awake orchestra exactly what he wanted. On the other hand, his chamber music experience stood him in good stead in all passages of an intricate contrapuntal kind. At bars 56-73 in the first movement, for instance, where quintuplet-figures of the violin are imitated, *per arsin et thesin*, throughout the orchestra, or at bars 190-214 of the last movement where much the same happens, Rostal elucidated the counterpoint by well-placed, imperceptible *caesurae*. On the technical side, his intonation is so true to the harmonic implications of a passage that even Bartók's most acrid dissonances convince immediately. He also has the secret, not of big, but of great tone. Flutes may scream, horns popple, trombones bellow—Mr. Rostal stands his ground. But more important still, his lyrical cantilena vibrates with latent energy. One can see why: he supports his tone from the diaphragm like a good singer.

P. H.

#### INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

RBA GALLERIES, 24TH NOVEMBER

ROBERT COLLET and Frederick Thurston proffered a programme of Busoni's music to an assembly of leading composers, musicians, critics, and empty seats. If thus, the setting

<sup>a</sup> Redlich, H. F., in this journal, X/2, May, 1949, p. 152.



commanded respect, the music elicited no more than that, at times even less. Music can be good, bad, or unnecessary. Where Busoni's unnecessary music comes near to the good it is not new, and where it seems new it is far from good; whence the problem of his work becomes both obvious and insoluble. To those who have not yet experienced a Busoni concert, let it be said that it may be likened to a dish of mushrooms: at first it would appear as if one had eaten too much, but after an hour one feels hungry.

### BEETHOVEN'S NINTH UNDER KARAJAN

PHILHARMONIA WITH SCHWARZKOPF, WATSON, SCHOCK, CHRISTOFF, AND BBC CHORAL SOCIETY

Albert Hall, 25th November

If Furtwängler's Ninth was everything and Malko's nothing, Karajan's was something. In the case of such an all- (indeed *All-*) embracing work, however, something is considerably worse than nothing, and if the Editor of this journal gives it as his apodeictic view that "Beethoven's Choral Symphony, after three magnificent movements, comes such a cropper at the end",<sup>1</sup> this must in no small measure be due to his having heard too many superficially impressive, but essentially inadequate performances. He does, however, realize the greatness of Furtwängler's and the immaturity, if not the fatality, of Karajan's interpretation,<sup>2</sup> whose chief merits lie in its elementary, though nowadays exceptional, musical common sense and competence. Thus Karajan knows how to counteract the danger of an instrumental or scaling *crescendo* in a *sempre pp* passage by a *diminuendo* (bars 43 ff. of 2nd subject in 1st movement's recapitulation), or how to introduce the last *crescendo* in the 3rd movement's 2nd theme's G major appearance by a secretive hesitation which at the same time serves as cadential calm: a simultaneous relaxation and tension. On the whole, however, his performance did not disclose the work, effective though it was in matters of execution. From the incomparably inept precision of the initial sextuplets (made just bearable by the Albert Hall's blurring acoustics) whereby the entire movement was already sentenced to death, over the castrated scherzo and the irreligious, unspiritual, in fact dreadfully "beautiful" slow movement, to what could thus be left over for the finale, we were offered a largely void and unobtrusively vain exhibition of stressedly unassuming musicianship. As if one could do justice to this world of a work without assuming a spontaneously devout cosmocracy! But even if we return to musical earth we are bound to note that at certain points Karajan's rendering seemed strictly meaningless. In the 1st movement, for instance, before the 2nd subject in the recapitulation, the C sharp received a far stronger accent than the *sf* aim of the phrase, while again in the *coda*'s bars 3ff. the main accent always fell on the wrong (first) bar of the phrase. Twelve bars before the 1st movement's final *a tempo* we heard the *subito p* in unaccountably strict time; a similar illogicality, though this time not of the "accurate" variety, occurred at the end of the first vocal variation, where Beethoven's *dim.* was neglected in favour of a *subito piano*. The scherzo's 2nd subject was beaten to death by Karajan's meticulously metric, unrhythmic stick; so lifeless indeed was the theme that the strings' dotted pedal usurped power—and I was not sitting in a place that was kind to the strings. After the trio's first repeat, the *crescendo* started amateurishly before the upper strings' entry. Before the slow movement's *coda*, in the first theme's last variation, the dotted semi-quavers were not felt through, whence they were played completely away. The smash on this *coda*'s bar 4/1 was bereft of reason, nor was bar 13 of the same section at all prepared: a temporal suspension would have proved much more functional at this point than six bars further along, before bar 19. The *détaché* triplets before the end of the slow movement had no idea what they were there for, while the disproportionate *crescendi* in

<sup>1</sup> Sharp, G. N., "Gustav Mahler". In Hill, R. (ed.), *The Symphony*, Penguin (Pelican) Books, 1949, p. 328.

<sup>2</sup> Sharp, G. N., "The Salzburg Festival". *MUSIC REVIEW*, X/4, November, 1949, pp. 293 ff.



the finale's bass-*unisono* statement of the theme not only tore the phrases asunder, but contradicted the *Freudenthema*'s wider formal function: Karajan cannot yet have lived through what for Furtwängler is the "Urgestalt" of the "Urbild" of all themes.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Beethoven came, once again, such a cropper at the end. But let us not quarrel too much with our Editor as long as the national Press, dismissing Furtwängler's Ninth, embraces Karajan's. H. K.

## LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

ALBERT HALL, 1ST DECEMBER

BORIS RICKELMAN's account of the Variations on a Rococo Theme at the fifth concert of the Tchaikovsky Festival was graceful and fluent, but he had to cope with an uninspiring conductor in Nicolai Malko. The *Christmas Eve Overture* is a patchy and not particularly interesting work, nor did the *Manfred* Symphony (first two movements only) gather much impetus. I thought some atonement was coming with the fifth Symphony after the interval, but never do I hope to hear a lamer or more impotent rendering. No *con anima* in the first movement, no *alcuna licenza* in the second, nothing *entrainant* in the valse, and no ecstasy in the finale. I could not have believed that under the baton of a foreigner this work would have been so mercilessly emasculated, and, what was worse, one felt all the while that there was potency in the London Philharmonic Orchestra which was not allowed scope. It was unbearable. I have heard Berlioz given like that, but Tchaikovsky never.

E. H. W. M.

## THE PHILHARMONIA CONCERT SOCIETY

2ND DECEMBER

Symphony No. 6 in B minor .....	Tchaikovsky
<i>Till Eulenspiegel</i> .....	Strauss
<i>Bolero</i> .....	Ravel

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan

THE original programme announced for this concert included Roussel's fourth Symphony and Bartók's third piano Concerto instead of the Strauss and Ravel warhorses, with the Tchaikovsky after the interval. Owing to the illness of Lipatti, the piano Concerto probably had to be sacrificed; but the *Music for Strings*, *Percussion and Celesta* or the *Concerto for Orchestra* would at least have provided evidence of some managerial enterprise, while I can only conclude that the Roussel was jettisoned in a last-minute attempt to attract a large audience. One of the objects claimed for the Philharmonia Concert Society is to provide the finest possible standard of performance of well-chosen programmes for an educated public. An admirable aim; all the more on account of its splendid isolation. But this topheavy bill of fare presaged a formidably indigestible banquet, and such indeed it was.

The performances of Gluck's *Orfeo* and of *Le Nozze di Figaro* given in Salzburg under Karajan's direction in 1948 were principally noteworthy precisely on account of the consistently high level of purely musical insight they each displayed; he has also made some gramophone records (e.g. *The Masonic Funeral Music* and Brahms' Requiem) in which this faculty shines like a beacon light. It is therefore disappointing to have to write that on this occasion there was nothing to relieve the tedium of three consecutive overfamiliar concert pieces except a certain technical polish on the playing.

On this showing, and bearing in mind other concerts and gramophone records (e.g. Schumann's piano Concerto), Karajan displays an aptitude for seeing through some music with such acute penetration that he fails to find much in it. Nothing in this programme really cohered, though the first and last movements of the Symphony came nearest to

<sup>3</sup> Furtwängler, W., *Gespräche über Musik*, Zürich, 1948, pp. 56, 57.

genuine integration. I know of no precedent for four side-drums in *Bolero* and found that in those passages where more than two were gathered together their clamour was irresistible and drowned all other voices; certainly Victor de Sabata achieved more with less in the same hall six months ago. There were other peculiarities of balance during the evening which, in sum, suggested that Karajan has still to come to terms with the Royal Albert.

G. N. S.

#### A WORD FOR THIBAUD

Third Programme: 3rd December. BBC Orchestra, c. Boult

Home Service: 4th December. Bournemouth Orchestra, c. Schwarz

Albert Hall: 6th December. Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Weldon

THIBAUD was poorly received. The defects of his performances were indeed obvious. The 69-year-old's intonation was not that of a youngster, while the rhythmic distortions, the muddling or swallowing up of, particularly, phrase-endings in quick passages, the extremely mannered *rubato* which sometimes actually obscured what was going on, suggested a man of younger and vainer years. Yet, among the legion of violinists (including the most celebrated) who are superior to him in these respects, how many are there who are altogether better than he, who show the strength and clarity of his imagination? Even with Menuhin you often feel that he does not know what he is doing until he has done it, whereas Thibaud only moves his fingers and that glorious right hand of his at the behest of an intense idea. Hence, as distinct from the usual golden tone with aeroplane *vibrato ad nauseam*, Thibaud's smooth and subtle tone modulates within a quite exceptionally wide range of qualities. And how can one pass over those thousand little feats of imaginative phrasing at crucial points, such as the restrained, suspending, yet flowing F sharp major return of the *Symphonie espagnole's* rondo theme? Even Thibaud's tendency to re-compose (entirely unnoticed, it would appear) is largely rooted in his musical imagination: each of the plentiful alterations to which he subjected the violin part of the Lalo proved a provable improvement. At the same time I must admit that to adorn the final cadence of Mozart's G major Concerto with a  $\text{d}^{\flat}\text{-}\text{g}$  pizz. was outrageous. When I heard this over the radio I thought it was a momentary lapse; but he did the same thing with the greatest delight in the Albert Hall.

I wish the BBC would stop teaching us unless they know. They make the young and trustful believe that of the Lalo's five movements, "the first, fourth and fifth are usually played". Before I came to this country, I never heard the work without the second movement. Nor is Thibaud right in omitting it, for it is a good piece (not so the *Intermezzo*). Besides, without the scherzo, the extended second part of the rondo's central episode (based on the slow movement's theme) follows too soon after the first movement's lyrical D minor theme of the same type.

#### JOAN OF ARC AT THE STAKE

BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus with Choir of Mary Datchelor Girls' School, a cast of speakers headed by Constance Cummings as Joan, and with Danco, Hooke, Ripley, Jones, Soames and Williams. Produced by Herbage; c. Cameron.

Albert Hall, 7th December

ONLY when it is realized that here is a work of a full-blooded musician will its variety of styles, of psychic as well as antiphonal standpoints, of media, in fact of genres, be seen in historical perspective, i.e. as one of the often contradictory manifestations of a highly transitional stage in the development of creativity. As long, of course, as the creative power of the work is not felt, no amount of historical explanations will make it worth explaining. The current maxim, held by the highest of educational brows, that cultivation of "the historical point of view" widens and deepens artistic understanding, is a *petitio principii*. A good viewpoint may make a man look, but not see; once, on the other

hand, he has grown to see, he will find himself the best viewpoints. "A bag of tricks!" The shouts echoed round the Albert Hall. For once the usual admirers of technique found themselves opposing it, but then it proved at times inspired. For my own part, I prefer Honegger's tricks to, say, Mr. Rutland Boughton's inspirations. Nor would it be useless for some of the shouters' idols to examine the contents of the bag in some detail, to study, for example, Honegger's approach to the eternal problem of melodramatic texture: in all but a few improvable instances he treads with the utmost musical caution. No doubt his film-music experience has stood him in good stead. "Film music!" indeed the shouters shouted; divining the law of the truest lie's survival, they manage to hide the false behind the right word. Let us hope that some of them listened at least to the closing sounds, that God-sent D major-minor which would hardly have seemed possible at this time of the day, when wellnigh every major-minor manoeuvre serves only to recall its precedents. Not great at its best, *Joan of Arc at the Stake* is dull at its realistic worst: an obvious object for underestimation. Like the third Symphony (*Liturgique*), however, it had to be written.

### ANGLO-AUSTRIAN MUSIC SOCIETY

WIGMORE HALL, 9TH DECEMBER

FRIEDRICH GULDA, the 19-year-old Austrian pianist who won the first prize at the International Competition at Geneva in 1946, roused the audience to the most audible applause on record in *diesen schläfrigen Hallen*. Musicians, nay, even pianists assured one another that they had never heard the like of this performance (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Prokofiev No. 7, Debussy). I think they had—in kind if not in accomplishment, in their mind's eye if not in flesh. For while Mr. Gulda is a player of the most astounding calibre, he is a man of our time too. Neither his often guilt-laden *rubato* nor its emphatic absence always function well formally. He would, for example, turn into the 2nd subject of K. 576's first movement ("Mozart, Sonata in D major", programme as well as announcements read) by way of a literal rather than the only logical *rubato*: afraid of giving the quaver rest its structural due, he unintentionally robbed it of its value. I cannot believe that the best among the audience's musicians would have acquiesced in such streamline shapes if they had noticed them. But then the most glaringly unrhythmic is accepted if it serves an illusory continuity, and the less time is wasted on rests, transitions, passage work and last movements, the better. At the same time, such is Mr. Gulda's powerful rather than fully potent musicality, his bubbling imagination, that he will not easily give in to our age's, indeed his own musical morality. What then does he do? He converts a great amount of his latent agogic into dynamic energy. I suggest it is on this basis that he has developed his ability of calling an almost unprecedented variety of dynamic shades into play.

H. K.

### ELISABETH SCHWARZKOPF

WIGMORE HALL, 18TH DECEMBER

IN these days of chronic mediocrity, or worse, it is a fine tonic for the critic to be able to record enthusiastic approval. Critics are deliberately hard to please, in the interest of pushing the artistic standard ever higher, and there is still work to be done before we can even pretend that we have regained the general level of 1939. But music still has its shining lights to confound the little-minded mock-musicians and to put to shame the commercial humbug of London's concert circus.

An entire recital of Hugo Wolf, which this was, implies a certain element of strain for the performers, and for the audience as well if one may assume full attention and awareness. Wolf's musical range is not large, his "wrong notes" (once one is familiar with the idiom) can often be forecast, and the full subtlety of his peculiarly imaginative fusion of words and music is bound to be lost on any gathering of people so stolidly monoglot as the

English. From the 25-odd songs which formed Miss Schwarzkopf's programme, *Begegnung*, *Storchenbotschaft*, *Bedeckt mich mit Blumen* and *Ganymed* seemed particularly congenial to her, and perhaps also to Gerald Moore who was never less than his usual imperturbable and satisfying self, for in these four items at least we were given evidence of that co-operation and unity of purpose which is essential to any portrayal at full stature of music other than solo.

This was a great experience: a recital that made demands of its listeners. If there were more such, the musical health of London would soon be toned up appreciably.

G. N. S.

## Opera

### MOZART UP THE COVENT GARDEN PATH

*The Marriage of Figaro*: 4th October

*The Magic Flute*: 6th October

*The Magic Flute*

*Is a beaut.*

*But Carmen*

*Is more charmen!*

*And an Abdulla No. 7*

*Is just heaven!*

WE stand in dire need of a Society that will prevent the mutilation of musical masterpieces, the officers of which would be kept fully employed examining the multiple injuries inflicted upon Mozart at Covent Garden. It is quite possible for there to be sensitive misunderstanding of a complex musical work, particularly one so delicately poised as *Figaro*; such misunderstanding might be forgiven and then happily forgotten. But clumsy manhandling of the order perpetrated at Covent Garden must be severely condemned, although there can be little hope of an institution that can allow the above-quoted advertisement to appear in the pages of its programmes ever achieving sufficient self-discipline to consider either its limitations or public responsibilities. As it happens, the *Thoughts on Opera* by Abdulla were about as profound as (apparently) the thoughts of the Director of Productions had been about *The Marriage of Figaro*, which was continuously ruined by the most inept stagecraft. For me one of the miracles of Covent Garden is the persistence of Dr. Rankl (who is undoubtedly a real musician) in sitting out the ill-contrived contrivances of Mr. Brook. Without wishing to raise again the over-argued case for singing opera in its original language, nevertheless it must be mentioned; as some of the blame for the reprehensibly Gilbertian flavour of much of the Covent Garden *Figaro* must rest with Professor Dent's translation of the libretto which strains uncomfortably after the comic and never succeeds in sounding as witty as its Italian counterpart, a deficiency particularly noticeable in the recitatives. Generally Professor Dent's rather light-hearted estimate of the Mozart operas<sup>1</sup> is transformed and transfigured at Covent Garden into an attitude of knock-about farce. Thus it was that the great consecutive arias of *Figaro's* Act 1, instead of exploding like the set pieces in a display of fireworks, spluttered dismally but never ignited. In the opening *duetto* *Figaro's* incisive "Cinque . . . dieci . . ." fell curiously flat in translation and it seemed that Professor Dent's mathematics were by no means *Figaro's* own. Mr. Brook, believing that unrelieved movement on the stage must relieve or negate tedium in the audience, never permits

<sup>1</sup> In his "Pelican" *Opera*, for instance, in the section devoted to Mozart the words "tragedy" and "serious" appear but once respectively, only for their validity to be immediately doubted.

anyone to stand still for a moment where it is possible for him or her to fidget. If Figaro is not energetically measuring space, then he must be shining shoes or brushing clothes, his various actions supposedly coinciding with the music. If Mr. Brook must have his way, it would be less exasperating for this strange and unnatural synchronization of movement and music to be alleviated by a little syncopation; perhaps a sweep of Figaro's brush could be off the beat. It would not only be less distracting but it would lessen our chances of noticing when (as often occurs) the nimble fingers plucking the silent strings of the property-box instrument play one note too many or one too few. Of a by no means unmusical cast, Sylvia Fisher as the Countess Almaviva sang with the most understanding of the part she had to play; that understanding was far from complete, although it would have been hardly possible for her to realize its tragic implications to the full: the production would have defeated the best of her intentions. Fundamentally, of course, it is this riding roughshod over the tragic undertones of Mozart's score that is the besetting sin of Covent Garden. The turning-point in the opera where, for almost the first time, we can sense that all is not to be sparking comedy, lies in the C major *Andante* that brings Scene X of Act 2 to a close: "Conoscete, signor Figaro. . . ." Dr. Rankl's lethargic  $\frac{3}{4}$  did not help much the essentially lyrical nature of the piece, but Mr. Brook's horse-play on the stage so convulsed the audience that the music was drowned by guffaws more appropriate to a stable than an opera-house. Had I not been left dumb by this almost unbelievable uproar I should have made a speech from the stalls and pointed out that the production at this juncture was, in every way, cause not for laughter but for tears. While John Brownlee's Count was adequate, Geraint Evans' Figaro never came to life, and Miss Adele Leigh's Cherubino was preposterous. Having rashly informed the press that a prune was the panacea for all the ills of singing, she sounded on this occasion as if a stone from that gruesome fruit had permanently lodged in her throat; "Non so più" was barely recognizable. The Chorus of Villagers managed to sing exactly like a chorus of villagers, a triumph of realism not demanded by the score. Although we may safely disregard an eminent critic's advice that we should be grateful (*sic*) for the production of *Figaro* we can not be too grateful for at least three great musical moments Dr. Rankl extracted from a more than merely competent reading of *The Magic Flute*. For once real passion and inspiration made a combined, if rare, appearance at Covent Garden and the occasions should not go unrecorded. First: In Sarastro's "In diesen heil'gen Hallen" Dr. Rankl realized absolutely the importance of



which is a condensation, musically and emotionally, of one of the most profound arias Mozart ever wrote. This minute phrase, used as a final three-bar *codetta*, might well have been neglected by an insensitive conductor who saw in it only a routine Mozartean formula: very often Mozart's last words<sup>3</sup> are his weightiest however conventionally disguised. Second: In Pamina's "Ach, ich fühl's, es ist verschwunden", at the close of the *aria* the strings made the impassioned comment upon her longing for death "so wird Ruh' im Tode sein" that Mozart wrote for them to play. Third: Dr. Rankl achieved just the right tempo for Papageno's "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" and so varied (psychologically) his treatment of the material that what is a simple alternating AB structure became almost an air and variations. This was near perfect Mozart and it was interesting to observe how well the orchestra performed when for once it forgot the notes and played the music. There were the inevitable and unfortunate lapses. Papageno's

<sup>3</sup> Viz. the coda to the slow movement of the E♭ Double Piano Concerto, K.365.



"Vogelfänger" for instance was phrased raggedly by Mr. Brownlee and he padlocked his lips so effectively for "Hm, hm, hm", etc., that we had an unmusical mumble of uncertain intonation. Dr. Rankl was at fault in the finale's duet between Papageno and Papagena (Pa-pa-pa) in that his rigid beat allowed for none of the astonished hesitation (accurately mirrored in the strings for eight bars before Papageno's entry) or the equally astonished increased momentum as Papageno's stuttering bewilderment evolves into delighted comprehension of his good fortune. Mr. Brownlee was a creditable Papageno and Shirley Russell proved that she was more suited to be daughter of the Queen of the Night than the more prosaic and infinitely more subtle (because more human) creature Susanna. Parry Jones was ineffectual as Monostatos and for the most part inaudible. Erna Berger, as Queen of the Night, was a considerable disappointment: first-night nerves hardly explain inaccuracies and deficiencies in an artist of her reputation and experience. The finest singing of the evening came from Marian Nowakowski who, as the High Priest, succeeded in presenting a completely integrated musical and dramatic personality.

*The Flute* is by far the more successful of the Covent Garden Mozart operas. The settings need attention: I am sure that both Wisdom and Reason would have to be enticed blindfold over the thresholds of the hideous erections designed for their occupation by Mr. Oliver Messel. One glance at the plates in Paul Stefan's *Die Zauberflöte*<sup>3</sup> would show that the right costume for Papageno should be based upon the illustrations to Schikaneder's text published in Vienna in 1791, i.e. all feathers, not a plumed tail and linen scales as devised by Covent Garden; and that the model for the Queen of the Night's starry entry in Act I, Scene IX, is Schinkel's imaginative sketch for the Berlin *Hoftheater* production of 1840. An occasional acknowledgement from the historians of Covent Garden that the past still exists would be welcome. A colleague complained to me recently that the Mozart productions at the Royal Opera House were "too German"; their real fault is, of course, that they are not German enough.

## ROSENKAVALIER

28TH OCTOBER

FAIR to middling, as the weather prophets say. Sylvia Fisher was admirable as the Marschallin: the part suits her temperament as well as does the Countess in *Figaro*. Constance Shacklock made a passable Octavian although she must watch her facial expressions, particularly at the beginning of Act II where she looked too maternal to be true. Her tipsy *portamento* as Mariandel in Act III might have been more convincing: here Victoria Sladen was more successful in the earlier productions. I suppose one can hardly ask Miss Shacklock to cultivate a more boyish appearance? Two singers were miscast: Howell Glynn as Baron Ochs was too much the jovial village landlord and too little the lecherous nobleman of doubtful vintage. Erna Berger as Sophie: simply the wrong sort of voice, and her acting was hardly noticeable except when it shouldn't have been. For instance, when the Baron pulls her on to his knee in Act II, instead of the bashful retiring of an innocent young girl we had the catch-me-if-you-can look of an experienced night-club hostess. Jean Watson made herself felt as Annina and so did Grahame Clifford as Faninal—but we might well be spared the feeling he gives us: it remains painful. The opera was strangely under-produced and the aimless roaming of the choral footmen suggested Mr. Brook must be taking a holiday. Act II's sets need new curtains and chairs: there is surely no excuse for shabby and faded furnishings. This is Vienna "in the first years of the reign of Maria Theresia"—not England, 1949. The little black page (to the Princess) Covent Garden started with has grown into a hefty young butler: he should be promoted and something smaller found to take his place. Karl Rankl conducted an orchestra that picked its way through the score with some difficulty. That it had been "Rehearsed by Percy Heming" (see the programme) did not seem to have made much difference. The brass, for once, were subdued when the opposite was required

<sup>3</sup> Vienna, 1937.



of them, notably in the fanfares that herald Octavian's arrival in Act II—fanfares that derive from the second and third bars of the Introduction to Act I.

The music wears well, one of its secrets being perpetual variation of its thematic material. The Act III trio still stands out as a musical and psychological masterpiece. Here we have a most closely-knit piece that nevertheless bears the imprint of farewell. The Marschallin parts with her last illusions of her youth, Octavian parts from the Marschallin. The trio begins with Octavian more or less equi-distant, emotionally and physically, the Marschallin on his right, Sophie, his new love, on his left; by the end of it physical conditions are unaltered, but how changed are the emotional relationships. The Marschallin is isolated and alone: Octavian is Sophie's. The subtle transformation is in the music. Just before the final climax a descending figure appears in the cello that seems to drag the hitherto tightly-woven fabric of the trio apart (figure 290 in the *Studien-partitur*): it is almost immediately taken up by (of course) Octavian after the Marschallin has intervened with one bar of her last despairing statement of her theme of resignation:



The descending figure becomes more and more prominent orchestrally until it is finally transfigured into the protracted chromatic slide that closes the trio. Octavian is Sophie's. Perhaps one of the finest moments in the opera is the Marschallin's exit; when she walks off the stage a whole tradition of music walks off with her. Strauss wrote his own obituary there—a better one than Martin Cooper's "His (Strauss') music lacks not only nobility but integrity".\* *Rosenkavalier* is proof of both.

D. M.

#### CARMEN

C. BRAITHWAITE, 29TH OCTOBER

It was unwise to make Martha Mödl sing in English and thus sacrifice her phrasing to solving the problems of enunciation; it was a mistake to invite the Press to her *début* where, under the circumstances, her nervousness was so strong that it would give way to nothing but exhaustion. On more propitious occasions her vocal and histrionic talents, this time somewhat disintegrated, will be informed by what one forehears to be a purposeful, and hopes to be a cultured musicality. Be it meanwhile recorded that we have not previously heard, for instance, the opening of the *Habañera* in a *piano* of such powerful rhythmic intensity—a minor marvel of major moment.

H. K.

#### SALOME

11TH NOVEMBER

BORIS GODUNOV

19TH NOVEMBER

PETER BROOK's production of *Salome* kindled the smouldering discontent of a whole army of music critics who emerged for once collectively writing sense and emphatically all of one mind. Wilde and Strauss went to the devil, to be replaced by Dali and Brook. Finally the flimsy whimsy of Mr. Brook's imaginings was exposed utterly in his own pretentiously complacent letter to *The Observer*. That document would make one of a fascinating series of letters to the Press, written in self-defence by men whose temporary notoriety blinded them to the transparency of their own arguments.

Personally I would have forgiven all the stage absurdities, had the performance reached

\* *The Chesterian*, Vol. XXIV/160/49.

a high standard musically. Mr. Brook complained in *The Observer* of the inordinate loudness of the orchestra in this work. If he was present at the Vienna performances under Clemens Krauss rather more than two years ago, he must surely remember that the quality of the orchestral tone and the fine balance maintained between stage and pit were among the most notable features and that only very occasionally were the voices submerged beneath the orchestra. The Covent Garden Orchestra was noisy on climaxes, I admit (it always is), and the strings below *mf* were thin, wiry and anaemic as is their custom. This is not the place for a clinical examination of the shortcomings of any particular orchestra, but they should be recognized as such and not attributed to Strauss.

The only singers to emerge with credit were Welitsch (Salome), Lechleitner (Herod) and Dickie (First Jew). Rankl conducted.

*Boris Godunov* was revived for four performances, presumably as a vehicle for Boris Christoff. Certainly he held the stage with the consummate musicianship, histrionic ability and self-assurance of a master. Christoff's completely convincing portrayal of the disintegration of Boris' character owed everything to his almost uncanny fusion of his great natural vocal powers with his equally impressive acting ability in single-minded pursuit of a fully considered and carefully planned objective. Christoff apart, the rest of the performance is best passed over in silence.

#### COVENT GARDEN'S CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME

*Lohengrin*: 15th December

WHAT made this occasion memorable was Lechleitner's fine performance in the last act. Earlier he had seemed nervous, possibly on account of his only partial mastery of English, and had been unwilling to make full use of his voice; so much so that one critic who left after the second act described it as insufficiently powerful. Edith Coates gave a full-blooded, if unduly obvious, impersonation of Ortrud who, together with Lohengrin, emerged as a personality towering above a troupe of puppets. Elsa, Telramund and the King had no spark of life to split between them, but sounded like tolerable concert singers in fancy dress.

On the whole the orchestra, under Dr. Rankl, contributed a sound which was more consistently musical than their usual effort: but there were some peculiar happenings from time to time which indicated insufficient or imprudent rehearsal (or both), for example—a pantonal version of the first act's Quartet at which, had he heard it, the composer must have turned in his grave.

Otto Erhardt's production was a great improvement on what we have come to regard as Covent Garden utility standard, particularly with regard to crowd-movement and lighting; apart from one rather garish experiment with a green spot!

The English version of Mr. Frederick Jameson is an abomination: let us have done with this parochial infantilism, translated opera, and give the singers a chance to do their best. Not all librettists were chronically addicted to unsingable gibberish, however consistently our translators may succeed in misrepresenting them.

G. N. S.

### *Film Music and Beyond*

ARNELL—FRANKEL

SPONSORED by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert Flaherty's documentary film *The Land* has—for reasons which do not concern us here—never been released. It received a private showing in this country on 19th July, 1949, which we were unable to attend, but the Americans allowed a further screening at the Central Office of Information's theatre on 12th December, to which we were invited. Flaherty is one of the few American

director-producers who care for a good composer.<sup>1</sup> In the present case this is the most important point about his effort, which in itself is bad. Richard Arnell's music, however (so far his only film score), is not, as the reader will hear for himself when the suite the composer made from it is performed. If a less primitive form of integration between music, film and commentary had been decided upon, the score would have been wholly instead of very partly brilliant. On the one hand, that is to say, there is too much unnecessary parallelism between the picture and the (except for a second's interruption) painfully continuous music, while on the other hand there is no attempt to make the commentary a more than accidental part of the admittedly clear texture; not to speak of the possibility of leaving at any rate part of the speech-track alone. Both these deficiencies are heard simultaneously at the beginning of the B flat minor machine piece which, slightly Stravinskyian, is in itself excellent. As in quite a few other places, a new section starts here abruptly, not for any valid musical reason, but in order to parallel the change of film-sequence. And to make things worse, the opening of the piece is drowned by the infantile commentary. But while its form is thus too filmic and its texture not filmic enough, the music is, for the rest, better than Virgil Thomson's remarkable score for Flaherty's later and much better film *Louisiana Story*.<sup>2</sup> Incomprehensible indeed it seems why the British film industry has so far failed to avail itself of Arnell's services.

Where Benjamin Frankel's score for *Give Us this Day* (following closely upon his *Chillern Hundreds*) proceeds in what Arnell<sup>3</sup> calls chromatic major and minor keys, it is quite exceptionally excellent: at the film's anticipatory beginning, for instance, whose as yet undefined emotional build-up, together with its generous freedom from speech, offers the musician unusual opportunities which Frankel has used to the full. But when we ride via A major to Geremio's and Annunziata's diatonic honeymoon, the music dries up, and neither the canonic nor any other treatment of the scene's theme can elicit an ounce of emotion from us, barring the embarrassed feeling of witnessing an unintentional *pastiche*, of overhearing, as it were, the composer's absent-minded mutter: "Short bliss . . . strong contrast . . . we'd better be diatonic". Can Prof. Frankel honestly say that he felt anything of the slightest weight when writing this scene? With paradoxical relief we welcome the approach of the honeymoon's tragic end, where the theme, again in A, is at least modified by Lydian fourth and flat sixth. Under what circumstances, then, can a modern composer's diatonicism express "straight", unreflective feelings, as distinct from serving a reflective purpose of comment, characterization, irony and so on? Or thinking psychoanalytically, where do we still find expressive diatonic music that does not derive most of its energy from the self-observing superego? When Schönberg says, "There is still plenty of good music to be written in C major" he means of course what Arnell<sup>3</sup> calls "chromatic C major". The aphorism, however, considers the question only from the chronological standpoint, whereas in fact one and the same time is not the same time for all realms within one civilization, nor even for all creators within one realm. This is pre-eminently true of the present, complexly transitional period, where indeed some can express diatonically what others cannot. Naturally, such a capability is not a function of capacity (or incapacity), but rather of personality and musical environment. The French, who are only just now starting on twelve-tonal composition,<sup>3</sup> seem to find spontaneous and naive diatonicism still comparatively easy—other, endopsychic things being as equal as theory can make them. Whereas over here, even an essentially light and constitutionally diatonic composer like Arthur Benjamin uses pronounced diatonicism only for purposes of intentional *pastiche* and characterization. Nor has Frankel's light-musical past helped him to institute a diatonic department in that living part of his musical soul which does not rely on the superego. Where, on the other hand, his superego contributes, as in the bitterly ironical vulgarity of the C minor jazz which introduces Geremio and Annunziata to their tenement rooms, his musical history helps him towards vital diatonicism. H. K.

<sup>1</sup> See Keller, H., "Film Music: *Louisiana Story*", *Music Survey*, Vol. II, Nos. 2 and 3, Autumn 1949 and Winter 1949/50.

<sup>2</sup> Arnell, R., "A Note on Tonality", *Music Survey*, II/3, Winter, 1949/50

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Leibowitz, R., *A New French Composer: André Casanova, o.c.*

## Book Reviews

*Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody.* By Millar Patrick. Pp. xxiii + 230. (Oxford University Press.) 1949. 12s. 6d.

This beautiful book by Dr. Millar Patrick, the opportune result of a lifelong study, brings us at last a complete and readily accessible survey of Scottish Psalmody. It is admirably done. Every page reveals the author's wide knowledge, his human sympathy and his rich sense of humour.

The subject affords ample scope for such gifts. In the history of this country's ecclesiastical music there are few episodes which awakened so much fervour as the introduction of the metrical Psalms at the Reformation, for they provided congregations with ready and attractive material for assuming the responsible share in the services of the Church which had been suddenly allotted to them. Nowhere was the enthusiasm greater than in Scotland. There the psalms from the Book of Common Order supplied everything that was necessary. Knox had brought the first numbers from Geneva and soon had the complete Psalter ready for publication. The Church, Parliament and the most influential forces of the laity gave the work their full support and made it a national institution. It at once went into constant use. It lit a flame in the hearts of the people throughout the land. They rejoiced in the new opportunities for expression in worship, and in the Psalm Book, as it came to be called, they found their unique manual of devotion. Their children were christened to its phrases and from an early age had to memorize their set pages. They were married to a psalm. From every house in town and village the family could be heard in their chosen verses each morning and each evening. They carried them into the daily round, a relief to gladness, a comfort to sadness. The gradual result was that congregations, as they overflowed into the churchyards, were actually able to take their part in the praise without the aid of books. Their range was limited, for some of them were still unable to read, but what they knew they could repeat without faltering. They were already united as a religious people accustomed to singing with solemn mirth. When we consider the troubled state of their time, their natural resistance to change in the established order, the lack of communication over wide spaces of their country and their limited opportunities for exchange of ideas, we find it difficult to think of a parallel anywhere to such a phenomenon.

This is the beginning of the story Dr. Patrick has to tell. It is not all like that, for circumstances subsequently led to discouragement and even indifference. The introduction of the present version of the psalms in 1650, the tercentenary of which is being celebrated this year, took place at an unhappy period and dislodged at one stroke the version that had been memorized by three generations. The most serious, however, of the disadvantages attending it lay in the fact that it omitted to provide or suggest music, although the tunes were held to be as important as the psalms to which they were sung. Indeed the Psalter might have passed completely out of use at this time had not the musical settings, before it was too late, been again given their rightful due. Its revival now found its place shared with paraphrases and hymns and led to a variety of episodes arising from the conditions of the time and from the Scottish character which fill many a gay page. As the psalms were regarded as Divinely inspired, precentors and choirs were not allowed to utter them at their weekly practices and they were provided instead with doggerel verses. Among many quoted by Dr. Patrick are these intended for the tunes they mention:

"The name o' this tune is called YORK,  
The reason I don't know;  
They micht as well have called it Cork,  
Carmarthen or Raphoe."

"The high high notes o' BANGOR's tune  
Are unco sair to raise;  
An' trying hard to reach them gars  
The lassies burst their stays."

But unbelievable above all were the early precentors who exercised a tyrannical sway in their grace notes and melismas to everyone's confusion and against every opposition, a wayward race to the end, typified by one of them whose dying advice to his son appointed to succeed him was, "Resist a' improvements".

Dr. Patrick has produced a volume fascinating in its strange history of the Psalter, many of whose numbers with their accustomed strains are now treasured all the world over.

T. C. L. P.

*With Strings Attached.* By Joseph Szigeti. Pp. 323. (Cassell.) 1949. 15s.

This autobiography of a world-famous violinist is saturated with the quality least frequently associated with *maestri* and *virtuosi* since the beginnings of musical literature—the quality of humility. The three-hundred-odd pages comprise a conducted tour ranging over most of the earth's surface and throughout fifty years of packed musical history: our attention is directed first towards Music, secondly towards the famous and not-so-famous names associated with music making, and only incidentally towards our guide and commentator.

Mr. Szigeti's narrative covers a provincial Hungarian childhood spent happily in a musical family, academic grinding and early engagements as "an infant prodigy" in Buda-Pest and Berlin, and the continuous excitement of working at and within music that has gone on all the time since his ascension to the top rank of violinists. His academic and informal studies were under the guidance of Hubay, Moscheles, Busoni—and fifty other composers, interpretive musicians, impresarios and musicologists whose acquaintance he has enjoyed throughout his professional life.

Writing in a language foreign to him—regardless of the number of years spent in an English-speaking world—Mr. Szigeti reveals a neat mind, a retentive memory, a clear style of narrative, which add up to make an informative book about a vastly interesting personality. He can construct a telling vignette of a musical occasion, a once-visited city, a social gathering, and has retained the innocent eye of childhood when setting out his comments on festivals, odd social customs, out-of-the-way corners of the world. His remarks on Russia, the Russians, and his work in Russia during several visits are the level-headed appraisal of someone watching the scene as objectively as possible. His observations on instrumental technique, teaching methods, standards of musical taste show that much philosophical and aesthetic, as well as technical, consideration has been given to them. His belief in, support of, and propaganda about Bartók's work are fully revealed; throughout the story of Szigeti's life there runs a series of fine threads of reminiscence, admiration and respect for Béla Bartók which may well be remembered when this great talent is ultimately seen in correct perspective relative to the musical history of the past half-century.

*Handbooks of European National Dances* (edited by Violet Alford). Pp. 40. (Parrish.) 1949. 3s. 6d. each. "Czechoslovakia": "The Netherlands": "Sweden": "Switzerland".

To their earlier publications on Finnish, Austrian, Greek and Portuguese folk dances, Messrs. Max Parrish add a further four titles. Each is written by a native of the particular country and embodies notes on the origins of the commoner types of dance still extant, description of a number of dances, notation of simple dance-tunes and dance-steps, and informative comments on surviving costume for folk-dancing. The inclusion of a lengthy bibliography in each case adds to the practical value of these publications, which should be welcomed by dance-students—both amateur and professional—who have room for a little more knowledge about the universal craft of dancing.

A. V. C.

*Early Chamber Music.* By Ruth Halle Rowen. Pp. 188. (King's Crown Press; London, Cumberlege.) 1949. 20s.

According to the notice on the jacket this book is intended for "the chamber music fan", or, as the publishers themselves more formally call him, "the chamber music



enthusiast", but he will not find it of much use as a guide to pre-classical chamber music that he might enjoy playing or listening to. The authoress herself acknowledges that her impetus to write the book came from seminars in musicology, and it reads more like a dissertation for a degree than a book for the instruction of the general musical reader. The first duty of a dissertation-writer, certainly in Germany, and apparently in American universities too, is to impress the examiners with the enormous amount of books and papers that she has read. A copious bibliography is also desirable, though the writer need not have read all the books listed. There are plenty of bibliographies printed from which the titles can be copied. It is particularly necessary to have read all the German literature about one's subject, but original criticism is to be deprecated; the examiner might not agree with it. It is however always safe to attack any writer who is French or English. There is no need to waste any time reading original musical scores. *Denkmäler* may perhaps be cited, but not manuscripts or early editions; the examiners may quite likely be unacquainted with them, and the candidate must on no account let it appear that he knows more about some particular thing than his examiner, or he may risk his chance of a degree.

Miss Rowen finds "chamber music" rather difficult to define. One of the first German rules for a dissertation is *abgrenzen*—draw a strict line round your subject and never cross the frontier. A work for a solo violin is chamber music, but a work for pianoforte solo is not, says Miss Rowen, though she at once goes on to say, "this conception would have been disputed by mid-eighteenth-century theorists, whose notion of chamber music included intimate vocal as well as instrumental compositions". Theorists, we note, not composers; it is the theorists on whom our authoress mainly relies. But she never criticizes the theorists; she never tries to think out exactly what they mean, or whether they are talking sense or nonsense. Thus she quotes the full title of Füllsack's *Auserlesene Paduanen . . . auff allerlei Instrumenten und insonderheit auff Fiolen zu gebrauchen*, interpreting this as the expression of a definite preference on Füllsack's part for viols; but this particular collection consists mainly of English masque music which we know was originally performed by all sorts of instruments. Despite this fact, it was no doubt very agreeable to play at home with the domestic chest of viols, just as we used not long ago to play orchestral symphonies at home as pianoforte duets. Miss Rowen quotes endless old "theorists", but she never seems to have lived herself into the musical life of her period and formed a mental picture of its human side. *Abgrenzen!* "For several decades pure instrumental music was regarded with suspicion . . . as an abstract idiom complete and consistent with itself." Miss Rowen seems to have no acquaintance with E. H. Meyer's book, *English Chamber Music* (1946); it is not even mentioned in her bibliography. Viol-music is English and French, so she has no use for it, not even for Purcell's *Fantasias*, which many musicians of to-day regard as far more interesting than his later sonatas.

The voluminous Mattheson is Miss Rowen's favourite author, it seems. She has discovered that he copied largely from Father Kircher, but she draws no conclusions from that—it is of course a very common practice among musicologists both ancient and modern to copy from older writers. It does not seem to have occurred to her to consider whether Kircher's remarks on the music of 1650 or so had any value for the music of Mattheson's period. All German authorities, and all others quoted by Germans, are of equal value. It is not always quite certain whether she has understood what they mean, for she is very much at the mercy of her dictionary. Thus she invariably translates *intavolatura* by *tablature*. Now *tablature* has in our day come to be accepted (see the *Harvard* dictionary) as meaning music written in letters or numbers, for the lute and organ, as distinct from normal staff-notation. But that is not the real meaning of *intavolatura*; *intavolatura* means any way of writing music which gives the reader a view of the work as a whole, as opposed to separate part-books. Thus the arrangement of a madrigal for lute or keyboard is an *intavolatura*, whether written in letters or in staff, and the word is also used for the score of a madrigal. It might be correct to call this *tablature*, but at the present day it would be very misleading. Miss Rowen also quotes a passage from Mattheson in which he incidentally mentions "the moralist Sirach", apparently without realizing that the



gentleman in question is more generally known to English readers as Ecclesiasticus. Perhaps she has never looked into the *Apocrypha*.

The book certainly contains an enormous mass of interesting information quoted from other books, but the authoress has been quite unable to digest it and arrange it systematically. She follows the German rule and ends her dissertation with *Ergebnisse*, the obligatory summing-up of the writer's research which is intended to save the examiner the trouble of reading it all through. It is equally useful to a reviewer. There is no mention of the gradual evolution of sonata-form, or of the rhythmical system which distinguishes the age of Corelli and J. S. Bach from that of Haydn and Mozart, nor is there any allusion to the vocal sources of classical melody. At an early stage Miss Rowen mentions the trio sonatas ascribed to Pergolesi, but it never occurs to her to point out that their subjects are obvious imitations of comic opera songs. She seems totally unaware that the classical style of composition is derived directly from Neapolitan opera. Sonatas were written in sonata-form because all operatic *arias* were in that form. The *Tafelmusik* of the German courts was simply the attempt to make "selections", genuine or faked, from the last new Italian musical comedies. Miss Rowen has studied the evolution of instrumental technique, but she has not seen that the technique is the result, not the cause, of the fashionable melodic style.

The most valuable part of her book, though she may be surprised to be told so, is her study of French chamber music in the eighteenth century, a field little known, even to scholars, outside France, and well worthy of exploration by practical performers.

E. J. D.

*Essay on the true art of playing keyboard instruments.* By C. P. E. Bach: trans. and ed. by William J. Mitchell. Pp. xiv + 449. (Cassell.) 1949. 30s.

C. P. E. Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* belongs to the category of books that are constantly referred to and quoted from but seldom read. Everyone knows that it is one of the most important sources of information on eighteenth-century ornamentation; most people know that it is equally important as an authority on the realization of thorough-bass; but it has come to us filtered through the media of Dannreuther or Dolmetsch or Arnold, or if we have consulted the German text we have probably had to do so in the modern abridged version by Niemann. A complete English translation is therefore most welcome; the time is ripe for it and it will be eagerly studied by a great number of those now interested in the proper performance of old music who lack the time, the opportunity or the ability to grapple with Bach's not always easy German. His German has, by the way, sometimes been a little too much even for Mr. Mitchell, able as he is. But on the whole, this is far better than most of the translations of musical books that come to us from America; one may complain that "emotions" is a better word than "affects" (as a noun), or that "keyboardist" or "leaf through" (presumably for "durchblättern") is not English, but jarringly modern phrases (e.g. "it is up to the principal part to decide . . .") are rare and Mr. Mitchell is to be congratulated on a sometimes really artistic rendering.

Mr. Mitchell is also an able and conscientious editor. He has based his version not only on the original editions of the two parts but on the later eighteenth-century editions, and he tells us scrupulously where the textual *addenda* are made. He knows not only his author but his author's milieu and is able to supplement and illuminate many passages from other contemporaries such as Quantz; for full measure he has added a bibliography. (But something has gone wrong with footnote 32 on page 163; some such phrase as "according to the context" should be inserted after the "fortissimo" in the antepenultimate line.) He has perhaps been too faithful in reproducing Bach's musical examples exactly as they were printed, often with things in succession that should rightly be printed above each other; in one footnote, on p. 407, Mr. Mitchell does explain a more than usually confused musical example. Bach himself apologizes for putting all his examples on single staves for the sake of economy in engraving; there was no need to follow him. It is unfortunate, too, that the sonatas and sonatinas which Bach appended to the original

and 1787 editions of Part I have had to be omitted owing to the difficulty of format; the text sometimes refers to them at length and it is maddening to be told that "they are available in modern editions", for the modern editions are German ones practically unobtainable in this country.

It is to be hoped that readers of this translation, and people who refer to it without reading it through, will realize that Bach's rules and *dicta* are not universally valid for "old music". Mr. Mitchell's footnotes often usefully remind us that Bach's pronouncements on ornamentation did not command universal agreement even in his own time and country. But even Mr. Mitchell, judging from his remarks and quotations from authorities on pp. 19-20 of his Introduction, is not aware how fashions in the realization of thorough-bass changed in the course of a century and a half; broadly speaking, there were two periods when straightforwardness and simplicity were admired and two when considerably more elaboration was expected of a good performer. Bach is writing about the very end of the thorough-bass period.

Besides its main topics, the book touches on many other subjects of interest. "In recitatives, correct harmony is the primary factor; hence singers should not be expected to sing only the written notes and no others, especially in indifferent passages. It suffices if they declaim within the confines of the proper chord." That is important from the point of view of translation. How often has one heard the English language tortured to fit notes whose only significance is that they carry naturally and easily sentences that are not English; recitative is not sacred, "especially in indifferent passages". Or, again, Bach mentions in passing that "here" (*i.e.* in Berlin) "adagio is far slower and allegro far faster than is customary elsewhere". That sort of information, dropped so casually, can be very important.

*Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, herausgegeben von Friedrich Blume. 1. Lieferung: A-Ak. Pp. 112. (Bärenreiter Verlag. Kassel und Basel.) 1949.

THIS long-awaited first instalment of the music encyclopaedia planned and edited by Professor Blume confirms expectation that it will be a work of the very first importance, comparable in scope and execution with *Grove* and *Lavignac*. Its plan, explained by the editor in a provisional preface to be superseded by a definitive one when the first volume (of nine such instalments) is complete, differs from that of either of those works. *Grove*, of course, is organized alphabetically with plenty of cross-reference; *Lavignac*, in so far as it can be said to be organized at all, groups everything under a comparatively small number of main headings. (Users of *Lavignac*—how valuable it is, despite its chaotic arrangement!—gradually accustom themselves to the finding of information in unexpected places.) Professor Blume has adopted a compromise; the over-all arrangement is alphabetical, but the number of entries has been kept down by grouping definitions of technical terms, biographical details of minor figures, and other topics that call only for brief treatment, under more comprehensive headings. The first volume will contain an index. But the phrase "minor figures" is to be interpreted liberally: Antonio Maria Abbatini gets a column, the Abel family nearly two pages (three columns and a half).

All biographical articles are laid out on the same lines: biography—list of works—valuation and historic placing—list of modern reprints (in the case of older composers)—bibliography. The critical sections are generally exceedingly well done and maintain an objectivity that contrasts strikingly with the very personal judgments that have sometimes been put forth with all the authority of *Grove*; moreover the articles are signed, not merely initialled—a stronger reminder that after all these are only the conclusions of one fallible human being, not those of an anonymous Olympian. K. G. Fellerer's critical survey of the work of dall'Abaco is a model of its kind; in two columns and a half he tells us all that most of us will ever want or need to know about Abaco's music. The bibliographies and lists of reprints are particularly valuable, the latter even more than the former. (Dr. Redlich might have added to his list for K. F. Abel the Symphony in E flat, op. 10, No. 3,

edited by Adam Carse and published by Augener; and did not Peters publish about thirteen years ago a clavier concerto in the same key?)

In addition to the biographical articles this first instalment contains, among other things, important studies of Egyptian, African and Ethiopian music by Hans Hickmann and useful short articles on certain Arab musicians by Dr. Farmer. Beside entries one expects—"a cappella" and "Air" and "Akkompagnement" and "Akkord" and "Akustik"—are some one does not: under "Abendland" Professor Handschin discusses the debt of Western music to the East, and we are given not only "Absolute Musik" but "Absolutismus" (though Eberhard Preussner tactfully, if disappointingly, limits his consideration of music under political absolutism to the period from c. 1660 to the French Revolution). Other important contributions are T. B. Rehmann's article on music in Aachen and Dr. Farmer's on Aberdeen, Wilhelm Stahl's history of the Lübeck "Abendmusik", Walter Serauky's comprehensive summary of the history of the "Affektenlehre", Mahrenholz on liturgical music-books ("Agende") and Bruno Stäblein's four-page monograph on the "Agnus Dei" and its plainsong settings (the last an outstanding original contribution).

The setting is in double columns, which are numbered (not the pages), and the type pleasant to the eye—which is just as well, for everything in an article is run on, without paragraphs, presumably to save space. For some odd reason, perhaps much earlier setting, a few of the articles—including the above-mentioned studies of Egyptian music and Arab musicians—are set in a different, much less legible type. The illustrations are both plentiful and well-chosen: both separate plates and line drawings in the text.

*Johann Sebastian Bach: der Meister und sein Werk.* By Willibald Gurlitt, third edition. Pp. 116. (Bärenreiter Verlag. Kassel und Basel.) 1949.

After a lengthy preamble of some twenty pages on Bach's musical antecedents and the social organization of German musical life in the seventeenth century—interesting but disproportionate in a book of such modest dimensions—Professor Gurlitt gives his readers a first-rate, straightforward account of Bach's life and work, closely related throughout to the thought and practical conditions of the time. He characteristically finds space not only for the specifications of Bach's organs at Mühlhausen and Weimar but for the Weimar court-poet J. C. Lorber's *Lob der edlen Musik*, so characteristic of the early eighteenth-century German conception of music. G. A.

*Music* (The Arts Enquiry). Pp. 224. (P.E.P.) 1949. 15s.

A companion publication to the *Visual Arts* and *The Factual Film*, surveys already issued by the Arts Enquiry set up some eight years ago by the Dartington Hall Trustees (*The Theatre* is yet to come), this report is one of the most comprehensive and searching yet issued on the general state of music in Britain.

Almost every aspect, from the composition and the making of music, through material factors such as concert halls, to education and training, is covered thoroughly and deeply. The volume will have a long-term place as a book of reference on all aspects of musical life in this country during the last three decades.

The writers have not been content merely to state the facts; they have drawn stimulating conclusions. The report gives credit where it is due, but never allows itself to fall into the slough of complacency. Indeed, a hill is only climbed in order to point out the further ranges in the distance yet to be conquered. In that—in the encouragement of further effort, in the pin-pointing of weaknesses and in the constructive criticism of British musical tendencies of to-day—lies the true value of work such as this.

*Pablo Casals.* By Lilian Littlehales, second edition. Pp. 232. (Dent.) 1949. 15s.

After nineteen years, a re-issue of this book with its wealth of added material is a timely reminder for a generation of music-lovers which is in danger of forgetting both the art and the personality of Pablo Casals. His own voluntary and almost complete retirement in

the last few years is no excuse for this, but in an age when the newest name is always the greatest we need such reminders.

The word genius is almost invariably misplaced. To-day it is applied to all and sundry who happen to be experts at some particular art or craft, as if concentration alone were in itself evidence of genius. As well could a peasant who had spent his whole life in growing turnips claim genius because of his success in this sphere. Instead of being called "an infinite capacity for taking pains", a description reminiscent of an accountant in search of a monthly balance, it could better be termed an infinite capacity, and left at that.

This quality of genius is the main thing that emerges from the biography of Casals. One feels that had he made any of his other activities his main work, and music his sideline, he would have attained in any one of them the eminence he has gained as the world's outstanding cellist and a conductor and composer of no mean merit. In fact, although this biography goes into none of the personal details so beloved of the popular Press, one can envisage practically every activity of the man.

As well as the facts of the life and development of Casals the artist, there is so much of the living man in these pages that even if one had no interest in music the story would surely prove stimulating and inspiring. But there is more: and for the musician, and the cellist in particular, there will be delight, instruction and food for thought. In this edition Miss Littlehales has added some account of the events of recent years, events and the development of a personality which underline the essential quality of genius in Casals, and which are in themselves logical consequences of the mental outlook of the man.

*When Soft Voices Die.* By Helen Henschel, second edition. Pp. 180. (Methuen.) 1949. 12s. 6d.

Though the activities of Sir George Henschel extended into more recent days—he began what was practically a new career in his eighties and died in 1934—his heyday as an artist is, unfortunately, far outside the range of the present generation. By comparison, his was a great age of song and musicianship, and although we are inclined to regard it as somewhat leisurely, the tours and programmes undertaken by Henschel and his wife, as shown in their daughter's story, would probably send the concert artist of to-day into a nursing home with nervous collapse in one year—let alone Henschel's half century of it!

Helen Henschel has approached her task with filial piety and affection. Her flair for writing conveys to the full the broad pattern of life during that period when life and work had what one can only describe as "guts". Brahms, Alma-Tadema, Burne-Jones, Paderewski and others live in these pages, but this book is not only of people. Just as much is it of music, and above all of the music of the voice. If the singers of to-day were to take in and digest even one half of the advice given by Miss Henschel, from her own and others' experience, singing to-day would not be an art of which, perchance, to dream. The author quotes in a delicious footnote a story attributed to Marcella Sembrich, who, when asked what she considered the most important qualifications for a singer, is reputed to have replied: "A heart, a brain and a sense of humour". And added: "Of course, a bit of a voice is also a good thing".

*The Stories Behind Music.* By Robert Elkin. Pp. 152. (Rider.) 1949. 7s. 6d.

Sir Adrian Boult's concise little foreword to this book reminds us of the large amount of what is called "programme music" which now appears in concert programmes and on the air. In this tendency lies at once a danger and a promise: a danger that the many thousands of newcomers to music will associate all music with a "programme" (alas for the sins of the ballet in this respect!), and a promise that by means of this "handle to music" many may be brought to the ultimate objective of appreciation of music *per se*.

Mr. Elkin's guide will be of inestimable advantage to the large new audiences which music has acquired in the last few years.

E. S.

*The Oratorios of Handel.* By Percy M. Young. Pp. 244. (Dobson.) 1949. 18s.

Dr. Young has done a service in producing a survey of Handel's oratorios. As he remarks, many of them, which are rarely performed, more certainly deserve production than for instance the comparatively dull and comparatively hackneyed *Judas Maccabaeus*. And *Messiah*, despite its masterly quality, cannot give a whole picture of all the facets of Handel's genius. Valuable, too, is the author's reminder that vast choirs are neither necessary to-day nor characteristic of the original performances of these works; so that it is to be hoped that, as the author wishes, this book will stimulate choral singers to consider for performance other works than the obvious ones.

The interests of choral singers and of practical performance are avowedly the author's main concern; so perhaps it is not quite fair to criticize him for the two very weak opening chapters which set out to examine the Italian soil from which Handel sprang. These are both perfunctory, and, as Dr. Young has written them, not obviously relevant. It is, for instance, characteristic of this introduction that one has, on pages 30-31, to read two longish extracts describing Cardinal Ottoboni's musical gatherings, to discover the point that "In the struggle for iced drinks, de Bainville might have rubbed against the broad shoulders of George Frederick Handel". And when we are "driven back to the hard road of scanty fact", it cannot be said that Dr. Young's account of the formation of Handel's style is either way very clear or very illuminating.

However, one could overlook the perfunctoriness of this background, if the survey of the oratorios themselves were more satisfactory. Here it is not Dr. Young's conclusions that one distrusts: he says, in fact, many acute and illuminating things. He rightly insists upon the important element of character delineation in the music of the oratorios, which is too often overlooked (perhaps again because of the frequency of *Messiah*'s performance and of the tendency nowadays to hear it with ears attuned to Bach's more philosophical *Passions*). He emphasizes the need to judge the oratorios, like the operas, whole and not as strings of easily detachable pieces. And much of the comment on individual movements (particularly in the case of *Samson*) has depth and interest.

But so much of the real value of this book lies hidden because the author never makes clear to himself or to the reader what he has set out to do. He addresses it to choral singers; yet much of the book is of musicological interest. He glances at the social background of Handel and his contemporaries, but too often allows his account of conditions to degenerate into gossip (see the very uneven chapter on *Messiah*). He attempts to relate Handel to his age, but draws conclusions which are less applicable to the eighteenth century than to the twentieth. It is for instance fanciful to relate the "tribulation of a race" in *Israel in Egypt* to the period of Walpole's peace, and misleading to refer, in 1750, to a "succession of wars (which) had enabled contractors to grow wealthy on military requisitions".

This book would have benefitted much from a clearer scheme and more ordered presentation of ideas. As it stands it has much of value to give to the critical reader.

*The Instruments of Music.* By Robert Donington. Pp. xiv + 175. (Methuen.) 1949. 18s.

"What really happens when we listen to music? . . . What are the instruments of music? . . . Why do they sound different from one another, and better in some combinations than in others?" These are main questions which Mr. Donington sets out to answer, and his book explain the elements of acoustics, the nature and mechanism of musical instruments, and their chief combinations. It says something for the author's gift of exposition that the first part, on acoustics—a technical subject of no obvious interest to the amateur of music—is, in some ways, made the most fascinating of all. This is the most entertaining account of acoustics (limited in scope though it has to be) that I have yet read. By the use of apt verbal illustrations, the author succeeds in clarifying the subject without over-simplifying.

The same may be said for the rest of the book. The description of the instruments of



music is, again, clear and interesting, whilst the musical examples and technical information, found in the normal reference book, are omitted as being of interest only to the professional. The general reader, for whom, with the non-specialist student, this book has been written, will find this part, together with the final section on instrumental combinations, both interesting and instructive.

A feature of the book is the inclusion of descriptions of instruments which were until recently obsolete, in the course of the general narrative. This is valuable, and helps the author to discredit the idea that all instrumental developments have necessarily been improvements. In doing justice to earlier instruments, however, Mr. Donington does sometimes overstate his case. It is an over-simplification to suggest that the instruments available at a particular period were necessarily those most suited to the style of music in vogue at the time. "The tone of the harpsichord family is . . . well adapted to contrapuntal music each thread of which stands out with ready clarity"—but the author does not add that this clarity (which I think he exaggerates) is achieved at the expense of making impossible the emphasis of any one particular musical line. Moreover, the general thesis that instruments of a particular period condition the style of that music also overlooks the influence of social and political factors. In the same way, the author is perhaps over-enthusiastic to achieve the general revival of some antique instruments; though one can certainly agree, in a different sense from that in which the author intended that "the tone (of the Rebec) . . . would flutter the dovescots in our modern orchestra".

A patronizing attitude towards instruments of the past is, as Mr. Donington admits, his "particular bugbear", which can readily be understood. And with a caution against the author's slight overemphasis of the contrary view, one can commend this admirable book in all other respects.

*Keyboard Music from the Middle Ages to the Beginnings of the Baroque.* By Gerald Stares Bedbrook. Pp. 170. (Macmillan.) 1949. 21s.

Mr. Bedbrook holds the modern view that much of the music of pre-Renaissance period is not merely experimental but "no less perfect in its own way than that of later musicians". And his object is to survey one field of the music of this period in the hope that others will be stimulated to seek some of it out and perform it for themselves.

One of the difficulties, as the author well knows, is that, despite the mass of material to survey, much of it has not been transcribed, and such transcriptions as have been made are difficult or impossible to obtain. The value of this book will therefore be enhanced by the appearance of an anthology of the composers mentioned, such as the author forecasts in his preface; for, despite the quantity of musical illustrations, they are necessarily fragmentary and for that reason can only illustrate style rather than quality. The result is that some pages of this book contain little more than lists of the names of composers, even though the value of their work can only be conjectured owing to the absence or paucity of their surviving compositions. In the circumstances, stylistic rather than aesthetic criticism would have been of more value, and easier to illustrate. Such brief annotations of composers make for stodgy reading.

Even so, the author might perhaps have shown more selectiveness in the choice of his examples. He suggests, for instance, that early keyboard music was no less developed than vocal music of the same period, and, while aware that the direction "apt for voices or for instruments" could have applied to much of the music he has studied, nevertheless points out that modifications of vocal music were frequently made to fit it to a distinct keyboard style. This interesting point, however, is neither developed nor adequately illustrated, whilst many of the examples quoted give no hint of a real keyboard style.

The reader, therefore, is left to draw his own conclusions without sufficient material, in this book at least, on which to base his own judgment. The judgments of the author are modest and tentative enough. Phrases like the following, in reference to German music of the sixteenth century, constantly recur: ". . . possibly we may one day find more value in [these works] than has hitherto been conceded", or "Schlick may one day be considered



the greatest keyboard master of his time". Such absence of dogmatism is sufficiently rare to be refreshing; but it does suggest that as yet only a tentative evaluation of many composers can be made; and in these circumstances, perhaps, a different type of book would have been more helpful. For Mr. Bedbrook's scheme is that of the narrative a story combined with criticism of works and composers; yet he declines, probably rightly, to criticize with any confidence, without compensating for this by discussion of musical trends or indication of social and other non-musical influences. The result is that Mr. Bedbrook's book is too narrow in view (and too pedestrian in style) to be of interest to the general reader; whilst the width of the field surveyed, and the conditional nature of the judgments, weakens its value as a book of reference for the specialist. There is a useful bibliography.

N. G. L.

*The Choral Conductor.* By Leslie Woodgate. Pp. viii + 80. (Ascherberg.) 1949. 5s.

This is a very welcome book. There is no doubt that it will be a tremendous help to choral conductors, but as Sir Malcolm Sargent says "the half has not been told". What has is sound technical advice, and written in a way that all can understand.

The chapter on "The Preparation of a Score" must surely make the chorus master realize that an enormous amount of work must be done by him before the first rehearsal.

There is no doubt that the average choral conductor's weakness is the conducting of an orchestra and it is good advice that he should try to attend rehearsals and performances of famous orchestras from which he will learn much.

I should have liked a longer chapter on "Unaccompanied Singing" but no doubt lack of space prevented this.

There is an excellent section on "Articulation and Appreciation of Words", and I fully agree that the chorus "All we like sheep have gone astray" is the most misinterpreted of all in the *Messiah*.

"Programme Building" is one of the most valuable chapters in the book. The List of Works for chorus and orchestra, giving the full details of voices and orchestra required, with the timing of each work, will be of immense help. What a pity it could not have been more comprehensive and at least three times the size.

The "Appendix" of hints on the performance of *Messiah* is valuable on the interpretative side.

H. B.

*Liszt.* By Ralph Hill. Pp. 144. (Duckworth.) 1949. 4s. 6d.

One welcomes the reprint of this useful little book, first published in 1936. Mr. Hill has tapped some sources unexplored by Sacheverell Sitwell in his larger work, and within the limits of space imposed on him he has given a vivid and sympathetic picture of Liszt's personality. Though it was not primarily his concern to deal with Liszt as a composer, in a chapter on the music he gives a convincing answer to academic critics, quite rightly pointing out that Liszt "could have written a symphony or sonata in the classical style as capably as any of his contemporaries had he wished to, but from the very beginning he endeavoured to get away from tradition and exploit new paths". It is a pity that Mr. Hill was only able to devote one chapter out of seven to the last twenty-five years of Liszt's life, which are in some ways the most interesting, and I certainly would not agree with his statement that "Liszt created comparatively little of great moment" in these last years, especially as Mr. Hill elsewhere highly praises the remarkable late songs and piano pieces. Two small points need correction; there are nineteen, not fifteen *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, and the first two books of the *Années de Pèlerinage* can hardly be regarded as products of the Weimar period; though they were revised and published in their final form then, the great majority of the pieces date from 1835-40 in all essentials. But we are grateful to Messrs. Duckworth for republishing this valuable and entertaining study of a personality whose true value has been obtaining more and more recognition in recent years.

H. S.

*A Short History of World Music.* By Curt Sachs. Pp. 400. (Dobson.) 1949. 18s.

This is an English version of an encyclopaedic work previously published (in English) at New York as *Our Musical Heritage*. Of the *Kultur-Geschichte* order, it covers the ground (with no living English musician mentioned except Vaughan Williams, as a reviver of the ballad-opera only) particularizing the history of instruments, with references to two collections of older music recorded under the author's direction, under the cryptic signs "2000 Y" and "AS". This type of compilation sends one back in a rush to *Everyman's Dictionary of Music*, so much more helpful and unobtrusive, where, for instance, an invention like Emanuel Moór's of the Duplex-Coupler piano has a place. Truly, dictionaries are better than a "history" like this where, under Berlioz, *L'Enfance du Christ* is unmentioned. The paper on which it is printed has a pungent odour, but that is not the author's fault, and smells are a matter of taste.

*While the Orchestra Assembles.* By Reginald Nettel. Pp. 144. (Cape.) 1949. 9s. 6d.

The author of *The Orchestra in England* states on p. 53 of this "simple introduction" that the art of music as we know it is a compromise between science and aesthetics; there is a good deal more science, in the sense of explained mechanism and executive skill, than aesthetic appreciation in it. Written like a set of technical lectures, it discusses the capabilities of instruments (the harp is the most lucidly treated) and winds up with sections on the function of the conductor, where the name of Weingartner is absent from the list of personalities living and dead. There are some interesting literary citations as well as sporadic instruction in score-reading. The sole reference to Mozart is apropos of Elgar's altering a horn note, as "ineffective", in K.550 (O England, England!). The manual is not therefore to be condemned; it is transparently honest and written from personal experience.

#### HADOW *plus* DYSON

*Music.* By Sir Henry Hadow, revised by Sir George Dyson. Pp. 198. (O.U.P.) 1949. 5s.

This, the third edition of a manual first published in 1924, thirteen years before Sir Henry Hadow's death, now comes forth minus its last chapter, replaced by thirty-two pages on music in the first half of the twentieth century by Sir George Dyson, who has availed himself of a few minor corrections by Dr. Percy Scholes in the rest. I have purposely abstained from comparing the original Chapter VIII with its replacement, but as the jacket-note refers to "this successful book" reset ("Campian" for Campion, on p. 56, l. 28, reversed f on p. 194, l. 7, three acute accents omitted on p. 114, ll. 17, 18), one may perhaps, taking the success for granted, play devil's advocate and point to an oddity here and there in the opinions, which, Sir George tactfully says, "have in themselves a historical value". And, after all, if we do not view Sir Henry's work historically, we are hardly able to appreciate the mixture to which Sir George has treated us in this present year of grace.

Those familiar with *Studies in Modern Music* may remember those two volumes as an ingenious *plaidoyer* to convince the reader that Brahms and Wagner (with something more than a slight emphasis on the former) were musically the last word. Two major wars, in both of which Germany has been defeated, have made this position, even if desirable, rather hard for a "representative" English writer on music, especially, too, since the Tudor boom initiated, possibly, by Sir Richard Terry with Dr. Fellowes as its historiographer royal. Hadow survived one war only and, though he mentions Raff, he does not mention Reger, and his limited outlook peeps out in his ascribing (p. 57) to the themes of Tye, White, Byrd and Tallis "more amplitude and in a sense more vitality" than belongs to those of Vittoria or Palestrina and finding (p. 88) no tragic opera of unquestionably first rank between *Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Tristan* (*Fidelio*, no doubt, was not "tragic" and is later dismissed as an unequal masterpiece). He was blind to the romance of W. F. Bach, and found the concertos of C. P. E. Bach "of no very deep significance", apparently unaware that the first movement of Mozart's C minor Concerto

directly derives from that of the F minor. In Haydn, of all people, he found it idle (p. 100) to seek for tragic force or epic grandeur. Such a remark alone inclines one to draw "the memorial cross, the *hic jacet* of a dead talent", in his own words, with which Schumann stigmatized *Le Prophète* (not *Robert le Diable*, as stated on p. 109), on this polished and elegant handbook in which the *Pastoral* (p. 112) is dismissed as the weakest of Beethoven's symphonies. Against such aberrations of taste, his repeated statement (pp. 110, 122) of Bellini's influence on Chopin, now historically exploded by Mr. Hedley, his abuse of the slow movement of the Mendelssohn violin Concerto, his omission of Hoffmann as the founder, in *Undine*, of the later romantic opera (he does not mention, as he might, *Die Zauberflöte* in this connection), his regarding Verdi's later operas as written under Wagnerian influence, his conveniently leaving *Contes d'Hoffmann* out of account while equalizing Offenbach and Sullivan, and his neglect of the work of George Thomson in the matter of national song, are trifling enough. The devil's advocate has had his say; the pantomime is over. Sir George must receive full marks for his harlequinade; the paragraphs are brisk on the toe, and there is full realization (p. 180) of time's rapid whirligig in respect of contemporary estimates. We end, not with the three Bs, but *Rule, Brittenius*. But stay! Do I see the ghost of Ernest Walker flitting disconsolately in the wings? Poor ghost! Has not Sir Henry or Sir George mentioned your songs? Never mind! They have not mentioned Warlock's either.

#### DIM-DISCOVER'D SPIRES

*The Songs of Henri Duparc.* By Stanley Northcote. Pp. 122. (Dobson.) 1949. 8s. 6d.

The charm and intensity of the minute musical output of Henri Duparc (fourteen songs, a symphonic poem, an orchestral nocturne and a three-part motet), may be compared to the poetical remains of William Collins. The Frenchman, true, did not die in 1759 at thirty-eight; his last song was composed at thirty-six, in 1884, and the remaining years of his life till 1933 were passed in creative silence, at the mercy of a nervous disease. The reader of this pious monograph, of which fifteen out of 122 pages are given to the poets of the songs in question, three to gramophone recordings and a bibliography, thirty-nine to the songs, taken in chronological order with literal English translations, and a fair proportion to contemporary French composers, with an emphasis on Fauré, would welcome a more exact account of this nervous disease and the date at least of the advent of blindness (in the citation from Oulmont on p. 53, where "neau" should be "beau"). The malady of Collins is described by Dr. Johnson as being not so much an alienation of mind as a general laxity and feebleness of his vital rather than his intellectual powers, but we have no eighteenth century medical report on it, while such on Duparc, based on the most advanced conclusions of modern science, should be accessible to his students. There is only one other omission in Dr. Northcote's sensitive interpretation of the man and his work, where many should be grateful for the list of misprints in the published score of *Aux étoiles*, and that is the absence of any reference to Berlioz' *Au Cimetière* (1834, No. 5 of *Les Nuits d'Été*) apropos of *Lamento* (1883), which is the same poem, only Berlioz has set the three stanzas ignored by Duparc. A comparison between them puts the nature of the later composer's idiom in a very clear light. In Berlioz' setting the white tomb, the shadow of the yew and the trembling ray are *seen*, not by musical picturization, but by a *visionary act*, of a Blakeish sort, expressed in tones; they are not only seen but stay with the hearer till the end of the song and linger in his mind. Duparc's setting is rather a melodic rumination on a selected portion of Gautier's lyric, and the "rayon blanc" finds no place therein. His achievement is more introspective than visionary, and the same might be said of *La Vague et la Cloche* (if a comparison be allowed between a song and a piano piece) in relation to *La Cathédrale engloutie*. But to go back to Berlioz: listen to his *Élégie* and then to Duparc's: the words are different, but the poet is the same, Tom Moore, and the inspiration of both (I think I am right in saying) is the fate of Emmet. The one is the poignant expression of an ill-starred passionate patriotic heart, the other a delicate *recueillement* of "old unhappy far-off things": After

reading Dr. Northcote, I went right through the thirteen songs of Duparc available in the Edition Salabert, and felt continually, in spite of contemporary influences, the impact of Chopin, by whom Berlioz was untouched, but whose shadow, like that of Intellectual Beauty in Shelley's ode, has fallen on almost every later French composer, no matter what his reaction to Wagner may have been. It stares out of the extract (on p. 116) from *Aux étoiles*, out of the broken arpeggi of *L'Invitation au Voyage*, out of the F major section of *Phidylé* and the semiquavers in *La Vie antérieure*. It may be winnowed by the organ wind of Franck, but it is seldom away from the pianoforte accompaniment, haunting it as the metre of Milton's translation of Horace's *Ode to Pyrrha* haunts the reflective crepuscular cadences of the *Ode to Evening*.

### CARMEN: THE NOVEL AND THE OPERA

The Folio Society, at the reasonable charge of twelve and six, has issued in pleasant format, with eight reproductions of Goya drawings in the Prado and some musical examples, Mérimée's romance, in Lady Mary Loyd's translation, and a study of Meilhac and Halévy's libretto and Bizet's music by Winton Dean. All who love *Carmen* should possess themselves of it. Here can be seen how by the contrivance of man a masterpiece can be almost completely distorted and diverted from its idea to form another masterpiece very nearly equally impeccable in its own kind. The novel of 1847, the author's last essay in this genre, though he lived till 1870, in its disconcerting aridity of presentation and scholarly informativeness, even expanded in the footnotes, owes its strange universal humanity not (at any rate directly) to the gipsy heroine, but to the rapprochement between the two men, the archaeological narrator and the condemned criminal ex-soldier in which she is enshrined like a fly in amber. The character of Mérimée's Don José, a quick-tempered pleasure-lover, originally intended for the church, but fatally cast for disgrace, is tragic in its loneliness revealed casually but intimately to the student, whose watch the *femme fatale* happens to have stolen. No mother, no Micaela, lightens this brigand's load; he does not have to be detached from any human association to be doomed, and the murder of the being that has enslaved him takes place in utter isolation at a lonely gorge, not outside a bull-ring. This Don José is one of the most solitary figures in literature, and he can only tell his tale to one as solitary, a self-portrait of Mérimée himself. The incredibly hard and ferocious atmosphere of the fiction is due as much to this circumstance as to the deliberate picturization of a savage amoral gipsy type in contradistinction to the sentimentalism of the Englishman Borrow, whose *The Zincali* had appeared in 1841. That was Mérimée's way, critical even when creating. The only criticism I will level against this publication is that it says so little of the author, beyond what the reader gathers from the translated romance, but concerns itself divertingly with the librettists and the composer. Now no opera could reproduce in its authentic nakedness a scheme like this. Indeed recent experience shows us how a stark tale of Crabbe was completely put out of gear by working in a love-episode from another of his tales, so that Peter Grimes, the operatic hero, was not Crabbe's crazed fisherman at all. And that is what happened with Don José in the hands of Meilhac and Halévy. They destroyed this spiritual kinsman of Heathcliff, and substituted a "dashing Captain Brown", with a mother and a girl, from whom the charmer wheedles him. Even a French opera must be matey—no murder of Garcia—yes, and even if it is to end fatally for a heroine, who is really the traditional villainous *seconda donna*. Some of the best pages in Mr. Dean's portion of the book show how this necessity, implicit in the fable, cost the opera its chance of success in 1875 and possibly hastened Bizet's death. Perhaps I exaggerate and Escamillo (developed out of the colourless Lucas in the novel) is really the dashing Captain Brown of the librettists; but the fact that they removed the heroine from her setting and made *her* the showpiece, to the glory of the operatic stage with the composer's connivance (was his sense of her fatality prescience?), can blind no lover of literature to the fact that one gem was mutilated to produce another. But Mr. Dean has rendered an essential musical service in insisting on the scrapping of Guiraud's recitatives in favour of the spoken dialogue.

E. H. W. M.

## Reviews of Music

Schönberg. *Theme and Variations*, Op. 43a, for symphonic band (Schirmer). Score and parts. \$15.00.

This work presumably represents a ponderous effort to achieve a popular style: Schönberg here drops his usual practices in favour of G minor. Not that he often avoids tonality in "pantonal" music: he generally gives off muddled whiffs of conflicting tonalities whatever he is doing. Perhaps this impression is the result of my failure to grasp his artistic aims, so that his achievement may present itself by its reverse aspect. It must be said, however, that his "normal" methods of composition are those that defy the acoustic relationships of sounds to such a degree that the ear (not the intellect) can find no terms of reference at all. Everything depends on the reader's (not the listener's) ability to recognize the manifold transmutations and permutations of arbitrary note-patterns. It is inevitable that such a style, especially when it is coupled with distraught orchestration or what can only be described as multiple *tessitura*, will from time to time during the course of a work produce noises of some poignancy: for the rest, profundity can be assumed without difficulty. In this set of variations, however, Schönberg gives himself away. That he does not expect pantonality to appeal to a military band is the first sign of distress: he knows that his normal style is not enjoyable, so he will write in a manner that ought to fill the bill. He thereupon reveals that impotence which must in the first place have given rise to his grandiose intellectual schemes. How nondescript, how turgid, how ungracious is this music! Yet he seems not to be aware of this self-exposure, for he has since orchestrated this work. There is a reason for this; the general texture as scored here is complicated and chromaticized, and the best military band would have difficulty in playing it well in tune. Mixed wind instruments are notoriously hard to tune accurately, and there are many unpredictable vagaries of intonation that will creep into the most efficient of such bands, especially when different families of brass (cornets, trumpets, flügelhorns, euphoniums, french horns, etc.) are combined. Such a texture as this must be dead in tune if it is to make any but the sourest effect: hence the composer's anxiety to orchestrate it. One wonders if this decision was made after a performance in the present version.

The variations themselves are fairly strict harmonic ones: there are seven of them and a *Finale*, at the end of which the theme returns. There are many ingenuities of instrumentation (the combination in bars 51-2 of Var. II, for instance—muted cornets, trumpets and horns *piano* combined with flute and clarinet *forte*, with small touches of glockenspiel): the variations show some variety of pace and technique. Reger's influence has been felt in this work by one of Schönberg's admirers: \* one can only wish that this composer had a tenth of Reger's natural gifts.

R. S.

Hubert Hales. *To June* and *Ballad*. Op. 35. (J. Williams.) 2s. 6d. 2s. od.

These numbers would seem to be written for an audience that has almost ceased to exist. The amateur who obliges at a social gathering has been nearly ousted by the ease with which a wireless can be switched on. In any case it is doubtful if such performers would be attracted by *To June*, which contains some harmonies that if not actually modern are at least bad. On the other hand, the *Ballad* is a tripping little number and can be recommended to singers in village halls and similar entertainments. Why either should have been sent for review is a mystery.

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\* Dika Newlin: *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*, p. 277.



David Moule-Evans. *The Haunted Place* for String Orchestra. Full Score. (J. Williams.) 5s.

This is by far the best work by Mr. Moule-Evans that I have seen. His earlier music has displayed somewhat commonplace ideas disguised by extreme felicity of scoring. This work though no masterpiece, indeed the composer calls it a miniature, is at least well constructed and more interesting thematically than many of his more ambitious efforts. I have yet to be convinced that the composer has a considerable talent, but here at least he shows himself more than a note spinner.

E. J. Moeran. *Overture to a Masque*. Full Score. (J. Williams.) 25s.

E. J. Moeran is one of our most distinguished composers, but this Overture is not one of his most distinguished works. It is not altogether easy to decide why this should be so. It is one of a series of short overtures commissioned during the war by E.N.S.A. and is indeed one of the best of those I have seen or heard, but though it may be outstanding among its peers it is not outstanding for Mr. Moeran. It is not that Mr. Moeran has no talent for light music, his *Serenade* proves the contrary and yet if you compare this Overture to, let us say, Lortzing's *Waffenschmied*, the older work is by far the more attractive, although it is doubtful if Lortzing had a tithe of Moeran's musicianship.

Felicity of construction has never been Moeran's strong point and the inclusion of an *Andante* middle section seems a mistake from the formal point of view, charming though it is in itself. The melodies are perhaps not sufficiently distinguished and the composer's assumption that an indifferent melody can be made attractive by rhythmic ingenuity is not one that I share. It is possible that this review is too harsh. If the Overture were the work of an unknown composer I should have concentrated on the numerous praiseworthy aspects of the work, but with a composer of Mr. Moeran's calibre we expect the best and become somewhat peevish if we do not receive it. Technically, of course, it is superb and by any standards it is distinguished. R. G.

Mozart. Symphony No. 40 in G minor. (Penguin Scores.) 2s. 6d.

J. S. Bach. *Brandenburg* Concerto No. 3 in G. (Penguin Scores.) 2s. 6d.

Beethoven. *Overtures Coriolan* and *Egmont*. (Penguin Scores.) 2s. 6d.

These are the first three numbers of a new musical enterprise, extremely well produced in oblong format  $5\frac{1}{2}$  by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches, with introductions by the general editor, Dr. Gordon Jacob, and biographical notes by F. Bonavia, Frank Howes, and W. McNaught respectively. The printing is clear and the bars are numbered in tens. In the introduction to the Symphony the relationship between its first subject and the page's first song in *Figaro* might have been mentioned, and, in that to *Coriolan*, the appearance in the minor, just before the close, of the *Prometheus* theme in the *Eroica*, which perhaps connoted, for Beethoven, the essentials of the heroic character. Whether he found it or not, also in the minor, in the finale of Clementi's piano Sonata in F minor, its intention in the Overture is evident. I have never seen either point made.

John Merbecke. *The Office of the Holy Communion*. Ed. E. H. Fellowes. (O.U.P.) 21s.

In connection with the Prayer Book anniversary this handsome volume has been issued in a limited edition of 750 numbered copies. Canon Fellowes' introduction consists of a short biography of Merbecke, a section on his notation, and two shorter sections on the modern revival and the original text which is here followed with an exact translation in terms of modern notation beneath it. No worthier editor or presentation could be found. An appendix (pp. 39-42) illustrates a comparison between Tallis and Merbecke in respect to certain phrases.



## MR. EGON PETRI'S TRANSCRIPTIONS

D. Buxtehude. *Nun bitten wir den heil'gen Geist*. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 2s. 6d.

J. S. Bach. *Sheep may safely graze*. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 2s. 6d.

J. S. Bach. *I step before Thy throne, O Lord*. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 2s. 6d.

The transcription of organ pieces for piano is subject to the abuse of the octave, whereby the sonority of the organ is enfeebled and that of the piano too severely tried. In his arrangement of these three choral preludes Mr. Egon Petri shows awareness of this trap, and in the first he has in places given alternative left-hand readings. It may be said at once that these settings are models of their kind. No better study for *sostenuto cantabile* chord sequences could be laid before a student than the second, the *aria* for soprano, two flutes and continuo from the *Birthday Cantata*; it is a real treasure for a sensitive pianist. That of Bach's last work, dictated on his death-bed to his son-in-law, should be appended to all future pianoforte editions of *The Art of Fugue*, where indeed it originally appeared. Mr. Petri has sensibly provided it with a note advising the student to analyse it and then play it "sincerely and beautifully, without thought of the technical details". This could not be better expressed. The curious amateur will find at the close of the Buxtehude an effect surprisingly similar to one in the "Lydian mode" movement of Beethoven's A minor Quartet.

Robert Fayrfax. *Magnificat "Regali"*. (Stainer & Bell.) 1s. 6d.

This is the first serious work of its composer (c. 1480-1521) to be published for practical singing, and is one of two settings of the *Magnificat*. It is in 3/2 time, with the exception of the *Fecit potentes—dimisit inanes* section, which is in common time. Edited by Dom Anselm Hughes, O.S.B., it will rejoice lovers of old English church music, but a capricious modern ear may be inclined to relegate its 237 bars to the honoured limbo of those compositions which, with the perspicacity of genius, Berlioz once and for all not so much exposed as illuminated in the "Epithalame grotesque" (also in F) of *Beatrice et Bénédicte*.

## TWO PIANO SONATAS

Alec Rowley. Sonata No. 2. (Chester.) 6s.

Antony Hopkins. Sonata No. 3. (Chester.) 7s. 6d.

If I did not suspect, as one of life's sternest facts, that insentience (if I *must* not say "the British Ass") is an irremediable feature of our musical landscape I should account the publication of Mr. Alec Rowley's three-movement Sonata in D, after two major wars, an absolute miracle, for lo! *nothing whatever has happened*. We are back in the days, if not of *Salut d'Amour*, of the green grasses and maypoles of Edward German, the shepherds of Balfour Gardiner, and no Pan more dangerous than the young Cyril Scott is peeping at the lambkins over the hedge. Before writing more I must make sure that this is not a reprint. No. The British Museum does not help here. In a cursory glance through the fifty pages of Mr. Rowley's compositions (mainly songs) in the Reading-room catalogue I could not even find his *first* Sonata. Must I assume that the miracle has taken place? Of one thing I can be sure: that this sweetly temperate and unexhausting work (a few "daring" modulations before the reprise of the first movement excepted) will give a delicious thrill to the faded spinster who remembers our old *régime*. I intend, if I can find one among my too rapidly dwindling acquaintance, to present her with the review copy.

Mr. Antony Hopkins' C sharp minor affair, also in three movements, is another kettle of fish. His Pegasus has scented carnage. Starting with something of the fiery impetuosity of Brahms' first piano Sonata, he makes you feel that his vehemence is that of a sensitive soul. Though there is little repose, melodically, his first movement is well laid out and full of rhythm and colour. It is followed by a *largo* of a processional character,

a funeral march, with a short recitativelike passage by way of consolation (Mr. Rowley's *andante* is a rocking 3/4 Spanish sort of figure over a monotonous bass of six quavers). The finale is a good foil to what has gone before; a *fugato*, marked *tranquillo*, is followed by an *allegro giusto*; later the *fugato* is heard in augmentation, and unison triplets in 9/8 and 12/8, with other interrupting rhythms, make a brisk but not overweighted finish. The shortness of this last movement is commendable; we are in another world from Mr. Rowley's God's-in-His-heaven-Gaffer's-on-the-green parting *Allegro*. Poles apart as these two works are, there seems to me a Chopinesque influence playing over them, readily recognizable in Mr. Rowley's sixths and dropping thirds, yet surely equally so in Mr. Hopkins' unisonal conclusion, that takes the ear somehow back to the finale of the Funeral March Sonata. What a novelty *that* close was, and remains!

Ian Whyte. *An Edinburgh Suite*. (Ascherberg, Hopwood & Crew.) 5s.

These three movements (in F, C, and A), marked "St. Giles", "Holyrood", "Princes Street", form a quasi-sonata. Their programme appeal is not blatant and consists in little more than a suggestion of bells and urban majesty in the first (far away from Moussorgsky's great gate of Kieff) and the reel lilt in the last. The verse sub-titles do not help one way or the other. Taking the sections in reverse order, the jolly reel, rather common in its first waltz form, seems to have the theme of Chopin's early Rondo (op. 16) behind it, and the connecting passages sound loose and flurried. The nostalgic *andante moderato* seems with its chromatics to be making for nothing in particular. The first movement is the most virile in its lay-out, but has no point of rest. To one for whom Edinburgh recalls Georgian grace, a mountainous entourage and the very occasional romantic squalor of a wynd, this work will have no message. It rather suggests, as I have hinted above, the torso of an unwieldy piano sonata turned, with shrewd Caledonian sense, to other uses.

Ettore Bonelli (Ed.). *Classici del Violino*. Album Secondo. (Zanibon, Padua.)

This volume contains "reconstruction, harmonization, and *libera integrazione*" of ten eighteenth-century movements by Lolli, Borghi, Giardini, Porpora, Veracini, Viotti, Locatelli, Tartini, and two unknowns, for violin and piano. The whole collection is taken from a MS. in the Marciana Library at Venice.

E. H. W. M.

Benjamin Britten. *The Beggar's Opera*, in a new musical version (1948) realized from the original airs. Vocal Score by Arthur Oldham. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 37s. 6d.

My analysis of this work will be found elsewhere<sup>1</sup>; the only fully understanding evaluation of it I have so far seen is Wilfrid Mellers',<sup>2</sup> with which I identify myself. At a recent press conference (I gather from one who was present) Ansermet was asked about Britten. In his enthusiastic reply he said that those who spoke of the composer's "facility" had no idea of what lay behind it, and of its consequent value. One ought to study the question why the extent of Britten's genius is more readily recognized by the foreign than by the British-born. Winton Dean suggested some time ago<sup>3</sup> that "it seems the French have never forgiven the rest of the world for recognizing Bizet's genius first". Something similar may apply in Britten's case, but our question remains. It is generalized and supported, but again not answered, by the old laconic proverb, "*Nemo propheta in patria*". When one reads, from an otherwise dependable and independent pen,<sup>4</sup> that "the English Opera Group devotes itself principally to the ephemeral small-scale works

<sup>1</sup> "Britten's *Beggar's Opera*", *Tempo* No. 10, Winter, 1948-49.

<sup>2</sup> Review of *The Beggar's Opera*, *Music Survey*, II/1, 1949, pp. 45 f.

<sup>3</sup> "*Carmen*: An Attempt at a True Evaluation", this journal, VII/4, November, 1946, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Sharp, "Opera in England To-day", *The Chesterian*, XXIII/157, January, 1949, p. 63.

of a contemporary composer whose music has recently enjoyed an unaccountable vogue", one realizes, moreover, that the extremely complex and—in one and the same individual—highly variable conditions for critical sanity require the most careful investigation. Dyneley Hussey observed in his reply<sup>6</sup> to a letter of mine<sup>6</sup> on the present work: "It may well be that English ears, to which *The Beggar's Opera's* melodies are as native wood-notes, cannot attune themselves to Britten's notions of propriety in their harmonization, which appear to be based upon arid foreign theories". This, I presume, was supposed to knock me tactfully out, but until this day I do not know what Mr. Hussey was talking about, and am left to wonder whether he does. If so, would he please describe and define each of the theories he had in mind? Was he thinking of what Mellers<sup>7</sup> called "the cosmopolitan techniques of Europe"?

The vocal score is well arranged and, minor misprints apart, well produced. Tyrone Guthrie's textual revision, however, contains one lapse (Act III, after the scene has been changed back to Newgate Prison):

[Enter Polly]

Lucy: Dear Madam, your servant—I hope you will pardon my passion, when I was so happy to see you last.—I was so overrun with the spleen, that I was perfectly out of myself. And really, when one hath the spleen, every thing is to be excused by a friend.—*I wish all our quarrels might have so comfortable a reconciliation.* [My italics.]

Like what? I always asked myself, until I looked up the complete text of the original play, where I found the following number between the above-italicized sentence and the preceding one:—

(Lucy:) When a wife's in her pout,  
(As she's sometimes no doubt)  
The good husband, as meek as a lamb,  
Her vapours to still,  
First grants her her will,  
And the quieting draught is a dram.  
Poor man! And the quieting draught is a dram.

The italicized sentence must be cut. Guthrie apparently tried to save it by shifting, as it were, the accent from "our" to "all", but that does not make sense either. If (contrary to the poet's intentions) a formal reconciliation has just been comfortably if inaudibly completed, there remain no quarrels for Lucy to draw Polly's attention to; otherwise the adverb makes nonsense.

Béla Bartók. *Hungarian Peasant Songs*. Pocket Score. (Boosey & Hawkes.) 12s. 6d.

We are here offered the composer's free transcription for small orchestra of his original piano arrangement of these songs and dances. To my knowledge, the two versions are only mentioned on two occasions<sup>8,9</sup> in the somewhat scanty English Bartók literature. (I am not aware that an English book on the composer, translation or original, has yet appeared.) While I have not had any opportunity to hear the piece, I can most definitely say that one or two stretches will never sound to me. But then the evaluation of sound is becoming an ever more subjective affair, and I suppose I am not a Hungarian peasant. The score is very well printed; no misprints at all this time, it seems. H. K.

<sup>6</sup> "Britten's *The Beggar's Opera*", *The Listener*, 21st October, 1948.

<sup>7</sup> "Britten's *The Beggar's Opera*", *The Listener*, 14th October, 1948.

<sup>8</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> John S. Weissmann, "Béla Bartók: An Estimate," this journal, VII/4, November, 1946, p. 223.

<sup>10</sup> Colin Mason, "Bartók's Rhapsodies," *Music and Letters*, XXX/1, January, 1949, p. 36.

## Gramophone Records

The new increased prices of Decca records are as follows:—

<i>X series 6s. od. each, plus 2s. 7½d. purchase tax.</i>					
<i>K</i>	„	5s. od.	„	„	2s. 2d.
<i>F &amp; C</i>	„	2s. 9d.	„	„	1s. 3d.

Readers may not be aware that many fine records issued by Telefunken and Deutsche Grammophon are being published in the United States under Capitol and London labels. There seems no good reason why we, in this country, should remain satisfied to envy the good fortune of others and it is fervently to be hoped that the Decca Company will soon find a means of putting a representative selection of these records on the English market.

*Haydn: Symphony No. 92 in G (Oxford).*

National Symphony Orchestra, c. Royaltan Kisch.

Decca AK 2201-03. 15s.

*Symphony No. 94 in G (Surprise).*

L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Blech.

Decca AK 2204-06. 15s.

*Symphony No. 100 in G (Military).\**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca AK 1808-10. 15s.

and

Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Rignold.

Columbia DX 1623-25. 12s.

*Symphony No. 104 in D (London).\**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krips.

Decca AX 287-89. 18s.

Krips' interpretation of the *London* Symphony is the best of these and is given first class recording: an issue not to be missed. Van Beinum's *Military* can also be unreservedly recommended. The sets of the *Oxford* and *Surprise* symphonies are no more than adequate, while Rignold's version of the *Military* strays far from the Haydn tradition in matters of tempo and is by no means immaculate technically. Mr. Rignold manages to compress the Symphony on to five sides and Gluck's *Blessed Spirits* dance more or less unperturbed on the sixth.

*Dvořák: Cello Concerto in B minor. Op. 104.\**

Fournier with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik.

His Master's Voice DB 6887-91. 30s.

*Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto in E minor. Op. 64.\**

Campoli with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. van Beinum.

Decca AX 290-92. 18s.

Both these sets are outstanding. Fournier and Campoli give real musicians' performances, the orchestral playing in each case is clean, lively and efficient: the Decca recording is magnificent and that of His Master's Voice only slightly inferior. Fournier makes a forgivable slip towards the end of the slow movement of the Dvořák (side 7, last inch)—forgivable, but what a pity the side could not have been re-made. This is the finest available version of the Mendelssohn, but readers who already possess Gendron's record of the cello Concerto are not advised to discard it without careful comparison.

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\* Strongly recommended.

*Sibelius: Symphony No. 5 in E flat. Op. 82.\**

*Karelia Suite, "Alla Marcia."*

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Leinsdorf.

Decca AK 2193-96. 20s.

*Symphony No. 7 in C. Op. 105.*

Hallé Orchestra, c. Barbirolli.

His Master's Voice C 3895-97. 12s.

It was Leinsdorf's performance of the Sibelius Fifth with this orchestra in June, 1946, that first convinced the writer of this conductor's sterling qualities. I am assuming the term retains the traditional meaning! So far as one can judge after a lapse of 3½ years the records seem remarkable for precisely the same reasons: an evident thorough grasp of the structure of the work and a most impressively exact control of the orchestra. Barbirolli's admiration for and understanding of Sibelius are well known, but he has given far finer performances of this composer than the one here under review; it is difficult to specify any particular faults or deficiencies, but the overall effect is spineless and flabby as if neither conductor nor orchestra were at the top of their form.

*Sullivan: Trial by Jury.*

D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, c. Isidore Godfrey.

Decca AK 2248-51. 20s.

It is a great pleasure to be able to welcome the first of a projected new complete series of the "Savoy" operas. The singing, unfortunately, is by no means consistently good, though L. Osborn (Defendant), M. Harding (Plaintiff) and Richard Watson (Judge) are never less than competent; in a class by itself is Osborn's superb "Oh, Gentlemen, listen, I pray". The orchestral playing is mostly good, as is the company's diction, and the recording is almost uniformly consistent in balance, brightness and intensity. In sum, a good start has been made and it may be admitted that the D'Oyly Carte is not the only company to be in need of singers of quality.

*Beethoven: "In questa tomba oscura",\* and*

*Handel: Berenice, Air de Demetrio.*

Gerard Souzay with L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, c. Lindenberg.

Decca K 2290. 5s.

*Haydn: Die Schöpfung, "Auf starkem Fittige".*

Seefried with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krips.

Columbia LX 1245. 6s.

*Moussorgsky: Boris Godounov, Monologue\* and Farewell\* of Boris.*

Christoff with the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen.

His Master's Voice DB 6948 and 6935. 12s.

*Nicolai: Merry Wives of Windsor, "Nun eilt herbei"\* (recit. and aria, act I).*

Cebotari with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Felix Prohaska.

His Master's Voice DB 6939. 6s.

*Strauss: Rosenkavalier, Presentation of the silver rose and Finale, act II.*

Schwarzkopf, Seefried, Hermann and Weber with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. (finale only) Otto Ackermann.

Columbia LX 1225-27. 18s.

These eight records have been grouped to provide a selection representative of the best that is now being achieved in the matter of concert and operatic singing and also to illustrate the enormous recent improvements in the technique of recording the human voice. The *Rosenkavalier* excerpts suffer from rather more than a trace of distortion

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\* Strongly recommended.

towards the disc centres and the engineers who recorded the Handel *aria* have thrown in a high-pitched oscillation at the end of the side for good measure. Otherwise these records are almost as good as one could wish. Finest of all are Christoff's magnificent interpretations of the two most famous scenes from *Boris Godounov* (arr. Rimsky-Korsakov), considering both voice and stage personality Christoff may fairly be described as the most outstanding operatic artist to have emerged from Europe since the war: these records alone go far to show that the claim is not extravagant. Cebotari's Nicolai, without quite recapturing the perfection of her record of Ariadne's lament, still indicates that her form in London in 1947 and in Salzburg in 1948 was literally too bad to be true. These two discs (and I hope there may be more to come) provide a lasting memorial to an artist who must have been immeasurably greater than we in England had any opportunity to realize during her lifetime. Beethoven's little known funeral dirge has all the fascinating eloquence of his own peculiar brand of sombre dignity, beautifully conveyed by M. Souza; the Haydn recovers on the second side from a rather perfunctory-seeming start, and Schwarzkopf and Seefried sound disconcertingly alike in the *Presentation of the silver rose*. But all these records have their individual delights which the reader owes it to himself to experience.

*Wagner: Walküre, Todesverkündigung.*

Flagstad, Svanholm and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Böhm.

His Master's Voice DB 6962-63. 12s.

*Walküre, The Ride, and*

*Götterdämmerung, Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine.\**

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice DB 6949-50. 12s.

*Götterdämmerung, Brünnhilde's Immolation.*

Flagstad and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Furtwängler.

His Master's Voice DB 6792-93: DBS 6794. 15s.

As records, the purely orchestral excerpts are the most successful; though surely no-one still wants another *Ride* (and it has to be confessed that this one is noisy and ill-defined compared with Victor de Sabata's). The postlude to *Brünnhilde's Immolation* (DBS 6794) is superb, while this full, rich portrayal of *Siegfried's Journey* would be equally convincing if the orchestral balance were more nearly what we hear in the opera house. Kirsten Flagstad is apparently impossible to record without ruinous blasting; this would seem absurd, were it not that all her records bear it out. Of course, her voice is enormous and it may be that certain overtones react critically in conjunction with the resonance of the recording head and/or microphone, but it is equally possible that the problem might be solved by keeping her farther away from the microphone.

*Mozart: Clarinet Quintet in A, K.581.*

Louis Cahuzac and the Koppel Quartet.

Columbia LDX 7003-05. 18s.

*Beethoven: Septet in E flat. Op. 20.\**

Soloists from the Danish State Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra.

Columbia LDX 7006-10. 30s.

The performance of the Beethoven is admirable in every way, precise and accurate yet buoyant, and exemplifying the true style of Beethoven playing: note, for example, the sense of urgency that develops with the progress of the first movement. The Mozart, too, is well played, but the recorded balance allows the clarinet undue prominence. The recording of both works is good, but the surfaces of the sample copies were not all uniformly quiet.

\* Strongly recommended.



## KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL CHOIR

*Ding, Dong, merrily on high, and  
Three Kings.*

Columbia DB 2608. 3s.

*Once in Royal David's city, and  
In dulci jubilo.*

Columbia DX 1611. 4s.

All conducted by Boris Ord.

The most striking feature of these four carol records made in King's College Chapel is the altogether exceptionally realistic atmosphere that has been conveyed to the wax. The performance in every case reaches the standard one expects, though the horrible pronunciation of *excelsis* in *Ding, Dong, merrily* has a most disturbing influence: *ex-shell-sis* is an unnatural sound which makes the whole choir seem to be afflicted with ill-fitting false teeth, and what is wrong with the natural *excelsis*? This apart, I have but one other serious criticism: the range of audio-frequencies recorded is not very ambitious, yet the distortion towards the end of every side is objectionably prominent.

G. N. S.

*Priault Rainier: String Quartet No. 1.*

The Amadeus Quartet.

Decca AK 2278-9. 10s.

Miss Rainier's Quartet may seem to some a miracle of concision. Hampered as one is in considering a new work without the aid of a score, it would appear nevertheless that the whole of the opening *allegro molto serioso* is based upon the initial theme announced by the cello at the beginning of the movement. Miss Rainier's skill in handling all the possibilities of this initial "thematic germ" is not to be minimized: sensibly enough once she has exhausted those possibilities she stops. Whether she has managed to say anything of significance is another matter altogether. Personally, I doubt if she gives herself either enough time or sufficient material for anything of enduring musical interest to be created. The second movement, *vivace leggiero grazioso*, is even shorter and suffers from a rhythmic impoverishment that spoils the not ungraceful *leggiero* writing for strings: evidently something is still learnt from Mendelssohn. The *andante tranquillo* exposes all too clearly what seems to be a fundamental fault in Miss Rainier's technique: a surfeit of doubling, unison or at the octave, which strikes at the very heart of quartet writing where integrated discussion and argument between the four voices is essential. In this movement, Miss Rainier, after some rather purposeless ascending and descending scales, relies too much on a sustained and somewhat threadbare unison *cantabile* supported by *pizzicato* triplets in the bass. Over the percussive finale, *presto spiritoso*, broods the uneasy spirit of Webern, whose correct stature I should guess Miss Rainier has not yet estimated and whose influence she has only partly digested. Judgment must be made with reservation and caution but I find, after repeated hearings, little evidence of a distinct musical personality or idiom: as for the extreme brevity—whether that is due to precision or paralysis remains to be seen.

*Chopin: Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48, No. 1.\**

*Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2.*

Malczynski.

Columbia LX 1228. 6s.

Chopin magnificently played—with rare masculinity—and well-recorded.

*Gounod: "O Dieu! Que de Bijoux!"\* (Faust, act III).*

*Recit.: "Je voudrais bien savoir." Aria: "Il était un roi de Thulé" (Faust, act III).*

Victoria de los Angeles with Orchestra, c. Walter Süsskind.

His Master's Voice DB 6938. 6s.

Enchanting: strongly recommended to all those who don't know their Gounod.

\* Strongly recommended.

*Mendelssohn: Overture, Son and Stranger, Op. 89.\**

Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, c. Schwarz.

His Master's Voice C 3899. 4s.

*Verdi: Overture, The Force of Destiny.*

Philharmonia, c. Markevitch.

His Master's Voice C 3920. 4s.

*Auber: Overture, Masaniello.*

Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, c. Schwarz.

His Master's Voice C 3888. 4s.

A recording of this unduly neglected Mendelssohn Overture, which has some of the fresh vigour of the *Italian* Symphony as well as a passing thematic resemblance, is to be unreservedly welcomed. The Verdi is chiefly interesting for its strong resemblance to Berlioz at his virtuosic orchestral best. The grotesque (and unrelieved) dramatic posturings of the Auber we could well have done without. All three overtures are very satisfactorily recorded.

*Turina: Rapsodia Sinfonica.*

Moura Lympany with Philharmonia, c. Walter Süsskind.

His Master's Voice C 3913. 4s.

This *Rapsodia Synthetica* is competently performed and recorded.

*Rachmaninov: Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43.*

Cyril Smith with Philharmonia, c. Sargent.

Columbia DX 1608-10. 12s.

The work progressively deteriorates as we leave the Paganini theme and Rachmaninov becomes rhapsodic; the end of it all is a sad shambles. Most satisfaction can be gained by sacrificing artistic integrity and historical authenticity and playing the sides in reverse order. A rather hard-driven performance on the part of soloist, conductor and orchestra. The recording is inclined to be strident at climaxes.

*Castelnuovo-Tedesco: Tarantella in A minor. Villa-Lobos: Two Studies.*

Segovia (Guitar).

Columbia LX 1229. 6s.

An intelligent alternative to Mr. Karas and his zither.

*Beethoven: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67.*

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Carl Schuricht.

Decca AK 2253-2256. 20s.

*Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B minor (Unfinished).*

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Paul Kletzki.

Columbia LX 1222-1224. 18s.

The Beethoven receives the kind of performance a musical Toscanini might have given it. Schuricht seems to compress even further the already highly-compressed first movement. He is neither more nor less successful than most other conductors with the *Andante* which is, perhaps, an example of "the frightful backsliding" (Eric Blom) Beethoven's taste could suffer now and again: but if the *Andante* is a backslide, the *finale* is a landslide and Schuricht makes an exhilarating and convincing business of it. Recording excellent.

The Schubert is quite undistinguished from the first note to the last, in spite of some persuasive playing from the Philharmonia.

\* Strongly recommended.

Beethoven: *Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58.*

Artur Rubinstein and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6732-6735. 24s.

The latest Schnabel issue still wins (literally) hands down. A simple test: Compare the two slow movements. Both Rubinstein and Schnabel play the right notes but to Schnabel there's a good deal else besides. Nevertheless, for those antipathetic to Schnabel this set is much preferable to the appalling Casadesus-Philadelphia-Ormandy version recently produced by Columbia.

Bizet: *L'Arlésienne—Suite No. 2.*

The Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Sargent.

Columbia DX 1605-6. 12s.

*Patrie, Op. 19.*

The National Symphony Orchestra, c. Desormière.

Decca AK 2105-6. 10s.

Debussy: *Petite Suite.*

L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, c. Ansermet.

Decca AK 2047-8. 10s.

Richard Strauss: *Suite, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.*

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham.

His Master's Voice DB 6646-48. 18s.

The second (and rather long-winded) *L'Arlésienne* Suite is played with appropriate gusto and it is pleasant to find in the concluding *Farandole* the tune we all know so well that we've forgotten who wrote it. Desormière does his best with *Patrie*, which is over-scored (not a common fault with Bizet), too long, has no very discernible form and is surprisingly lacking in surprises or any kind of melodic invention: there seems little justification for a recording of such dull stuff. The *Petite Suite* is not very Debussyan but it receives the requisite amount of charm and *finesse*, which is about all there is to be extracted from the score. An agreeably smooth set. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* would almost be a pocket anthology of Strauss' many styles, were it not for Beecham's unwarrantable and arbitrary excision of several movements. For the Overture to Act I Strauss assumes an almost neo-classical dress (the nearest he ever comes to the Reger of the *Konzert im Alten Stil*) and is not averse to throwing in a modal cadence here and there: the piano makes a continuo-like appearance as an instrument in the orchestra. The remainder of the Suite hovers between plain diatonic harmony and intense chromaticism and we have constant reminders of *Rosenkavalier*. Peculiarly reminiscent of the first half of Act III of that opera is the *finale* of this Suite—"The Dinner". We might well say with Mariandel (perhaps a little ironically), "Oh what beautiful music!" For this rather intimate and small-scale music Beecham could have reduced his orchestral forces with advantage. We don't often have to reproach him for lack of wit but this performance certainly doesn't sparkle as it should. The recording is only very moderate.

Reizenstein: *Prologue, Variations and Finale.*

Two Pieces for Violin and Piano.

Rostal (violin) and Reizenstein (piano).

Recorded under the auspices of The Committee for the Promotion of New Music.

Decca AK 1187-90. 20s.

Mr. Reizenstein's work has something of the solid craftsmanship of his teacher Hindemith, a real concern, that is, for the process of composition. This sometimes leads him to be less imaginative than he might be, but the final impression left is one of deep seriousness, an unobtrusive but considerable technique, and moments of rare beauty,

unclouded by emotional or harmonic sentiment. In the *Prologue* the violin is much too busy and the relation between the partners sadly uneven. The theme of the variations manages to be distinctive without lapsing into rhetoric: the variations themselves might have been more varied rhythmically; there is a certain monotony of movement, though not of texture. Hindemith makes a very brief appearance at the beginning of variation 3. The *finale* (*Danse Fantastique*) is not of sufficient weight to counterbalance the highly ornamental *Prologue*, and in spite of its reference in its closing section to the mood of the *Prologue* and the theme of the variations, it does not make a satisfactory concluding movement. Nevertheless, a work well worth recording and profitable to study. It is capitably performed.

D. M.

*Rossini: William Tell, Act III: "Resta immobile", and*  
*Massenet: Hérodiade, Act II: "Visione fuggitiva".*

Silveri with The London Symphony Orchestra, c. Robinson.

Columbia DX 1585. 4s.

*Massenet: Hérodiade, Act I: "Il est doux, il est bon", and*  
*Boito: Mefistofele, Act III: "L'altra notte in fondo al mare".*

Licia Albanese with Orchestra, c. Weissmann.

His Master's Voice DB 6883. 6s.

*Puccini: Manon Lescaut, Act I: "Donna non vidi mai", and*  
*Mascagni: Cavalleria Rusticana: "O Lola bianca come fior".*

Björling and Orchestra, c. Grevillius.

His Master's Voice DA 1908. 4s.

*Guillaume Tell* is a French Opera. On Silveri's record it has an English title and is sung in Italian. *Hérodiade* is also a French Opera and Silveri sings from the Italian version. (Made for the ill-fated 1883 revival at the Opéra Italien.) Albanese, on the other hand, sings her *aria* from the same opera in the original French, properly reverting to her own language for the *Mefistofele* excerpt; we approve of the trouble taken over her one disc bilingual effort as much as we disapprove of the polyglot mess provided by the label on Silveri's all-Italian record. As for the performances, Silveri's is very good indeed. We cannot feel in Marguerite's song, on the other hand, that this colossal voice, this florid personality can possibly convey anything of that heroine's nature or her plight, and Albanese's record fails to do more than give evidence of a splendid and powerful voice. There is too much surface noise on this recording also. In Jussi Björling's record there is far too much voice and bombast, especially for the tender *siciliana*. Whilst Albanese's Marguerite is made to sound like a frenzied Latin equivalent of a Valkyrie, Björling's Turiddu is represented as a Tennysonian village blacksmith in full bucolic voice. Why must operatic stars yell their gifted heads off regardless of words, plot and feelings when recording excerpts?

*Bach: Violin Concerto in A minor.\**

Tibor Varga and the Philharmonia String Orchestra, c. Anthony Bernard.

Columbia DX 1586-7. 8s.

*Goossens: Oboe Concerto in one movement.*

Leon Goossens and the Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walter Süßkind.

Columbia DX 1578-9. 8s.

*Lambert: The Rio Grande.*

Kyla Greenbaum, Gladys Ripley, the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus, c. composer.

Columbia DX 1591-2. 8s.

These three concerto issues, so different in every creative musical respect, have in common the uniformly high quality of recording which is beginning to distinguish

\* Strongly recommended.

Columbia orchestral issues and the level competence of the Philharmonia organization as represented here by three different ensembles.

The brilliance of Varga's performance serves to raise these qualities of presentation to a level distinctly above normal. In spite of his very individual violin tone—best described as *cold*—the beauties of this issue are authoritative. Also highly recommended is the Lambert *Concertante*, but for different reasons. Pianist and singer perform without reproach and, as we have said, orchestra and choir are solidly competent. Yet the *toute ensemble* is no improvement over the very old recording made by the composer with Sir Hamilton Harty at the piano. There is not the glitter, nor quite the same tightness of rhythms so essential to this piece. We shall always keep our old set; but we welcome the new. This performance is good enough for the composer and must be good enough for us; and, in the wide range of sonorities called for, the old recording is, technically, all of its twenty years behind the new. Above all this work remains the best of Lambert and it is proper that a modern recording should be available.

Eugene Goossens' oboe Concerto has plenty of invention; particularly felicitous is the writing for the solo instrument and it is exquisitely exploited by brother Leon. But it is not a convincing work. The feeling is trite, depending greatly upon reflective woodwind passages uttered against *tremolo* strings—the much worn "English countryside" sound formula. The pastoral qualities of the oboe itself are not over-exploited; it is given very free rein indeed and in one long episode, on side four, the solo part above a persistent grumbling bass is wonderfully effective. Perhaps the work is too much an accompanied solo to be a good concerto.

Mozart: *Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K.546.*

The Griller Quartet.

Decca K 2224. 5s.

Ravel: *Tzigane*, and

Chopin-Rodionoff: *Nocturne No. 20 in C sharp minor.*

Ginette Neveu, acc. Jean Neveu.

His Master's Voice DB 6907-8. 12s.

Something in the recording has coarsened the Griller string tone in this otherwise welcome Mozart issue, and nowhere is coarse string tone more paralysing than in a quartet.

#### GINETTE NEVEU

Ginette Neveu is dead and we have lost one of the greatest women instrumentalists of our time. Tragically, her gifted brother was with her in the same doomed aeroplane. They play together in the issue here for review and we offer up the fervent hope that things other than these have been left on wax by these artists. The Gramophone Company cannot be forgiven for this present horror. We have repeatedly asked why Miss Neveu should be used to record trash of this sort and we now find no consolation whatever in the tragic fact that the manufacturers may have missed their chance to record a representative selection of her performances of real music. Whilst the physical death of Miss Neveu is a pure, diabolical accident, the gramophile's loss is not. In the last four years we could have laid in a store, by which to remember her, of records more worthy than Rodionoff's obscene representation of a work Chopin did not even father, and Ravel's tawdry exercises in spurious gipsy-gymnastics.

Schubert: *Im Frühling and Ganymed.*

Bruce Boyce and Gerald Moore.

His Master's Voice C 3900. 4s.

We are glad to see this HMV disc label announcing the artists as co-equals and not as soloist and accompanist. This is a fine baritone voice and a sensitive performer, and if Moore's piano had not been recorded to sound rather like a fruity celeste the record would have been very welcome.

*Chopin: Fantasia in F minor, Op. 49, and  
Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1.*  
Malcuzyński.

Columbia LX 1211-2. 12s.

*Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52.*  
Monique de la Bruchollerie.

His Master's Voice DB 6731. 6s.

*Liszt: Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6.*  
Horowitz.

His Master's Voice DB 6659. 6s.

The *Ballade* is not well recorded and is played with shocking lack of taste and grasp; a good example of feminized Chopin. Malcuzyński's playing of the *Nocturne* is free of any faults, but the *Fantasia* is not wholly satisfactory. It is curious that Chopin, who can maintain dance tempi endlessly and yet create no monotony of rhythm, should, in a *free fantasia*, create, as he does in Op. 49 a potential monotony of marching time. If the idiom is not to be quickly tarnished, the performance of this piece calls for dynamic handling of a subtlety we can expect from only a few pianists, of whom Malcuzyński is one; but here he fails us.

Horowitz' playing, especially when recorded to this standard, gives so much pleasure that it almost does not matter what he plays; though of course there is a point at which one should stop short. This piece is it or thereabouts.

*Saint-Saëns: Danse Macabre, Op. 40.\**

The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, c. Münch.

Decca K 2069. 5s.

A splendidly full recording this and a performance which portends the return of this orchestra to its old excellence. J. B.

*Liszt: Funérailles.\**

Gina Bachauer (pianoforte).

His Master's Voice C 3872. 4s.

This is a fine performance, and its full sonority is enjoyable in the recording. As played by Miss Bachauer, the music is most impressive: her enormous *crescendi* are enough to wake the dead and (in strict logic) nullify the point of the piece. Liszt, however, knows no restraints and must be shown none. This very muscular lady wrests the authentic thrill from the piano and her playing should be heard by all who appreciate really devastating funerals.

*Mozart: Overture, The Marriage of Figaro.*

*Delius-Fenby: Deux Aquarelles.*

The Hallé Orchestra, c. Barbirolli.

His Master's Voice C 3864. 4s.

It is now often said that the Hallé is a "great" orchestra. With this in mind we compared this performance of the Mozart with that of the Vienna Philharmonic under Karajan. The apparent ease and fluency with which the Austrians produce effects three times as brilliant and tasteful as those of the Mancunians decided the question at once. This is a pleasant, unremarkable effort, nicely recorded. The two Delius pieces are made to provide much variety of intonation in the strings, partly concealed by an even greater variety of jellyfish *vibrati*. R. S.

\* Strongly recommended.



## Correspondence

52, Darrick Wood Road,  
Orpington, Kent.  
3rd December, 1949.

### VERDI'S CHARACTER

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—Permit me to make a few comments on Mr. John W. Klein's misleading article about "Verdi's Attitude to His Contemporaries" in THE MUSIC REVIEW for November.

Mr. Klein finds in Verdi "a lack of insight, at times bordering on obtuseness", "arrogance", "a definite lack of critical sense as well as of impartiality", resentment and jealousy at the success of other composers and even an inferiority complex in the matter of orchestration.

Mr. Klein does this by taking words or sentences out of their context and, in almost every case, completely misinterpreting Verdi's meaning.

I should like to raise thirteen points.

(1) The comments on Gounod and Berlioz (man and musician) seem to me models of justice and detachment. Mr. Klein is in error in supposing that Berlioz was still alive when Verdi called Gounod "the first master of France". The letter quoted is dated 5th February, 1876.

(2) Will Mr. Klein give us the evidence for his statement that Verdi resented Bizet's success? Something more is required than Monaldi's remark, in his fatuous *Verdi nella vita e nell'arte*, that: "Verdi adored *Mignon* and preferred it to *Carmen*". Where does Verdi "condemn" *Carmen*, and say: "I do not like the type of woman who betrays her lover"? Can this, if Verdi really said or wrote it, be considered a criticism of Bizet's music?

(3) A propos of what he considers Verdi's exaggerated esteem for Ambroise Thomas, Mr. Klein tells us: "He found the lengthy Prelude of *Francesca da Rimini* (Thomas' last and feeblest work) 'very beautiful'."

The source of this is the letter to Hiller of 29th May, 1882:

"I have been several times to the Opéra to hear things I didn't know. In *Francesca da Rimini* there is a very beautiful prologue, very elevated, and the last act, too, is good. All the rest well made, even too well made, but of little interest."

Lack of critical sense? This seems to me a sane and moderate comment.

(4) The letter to Faccio about Massenet's *Roi de Lahore* was written before the opera was put on at Milan and cannot therefore display Verdi's "acute resentment at the warm reception accorded to a foreign artist of some distinction". Verdi seriously suggests that if his own *Don Carlos* does not fill the theatre, it should be withdrawn and Massenet's work put on. The passage quoted begins in this way:

"What is important now is to watch attentively the state of our theatre. It is sick unto death and it is necessary to keep it alive at any cost. And let you and Giulio (Ricordi), who are omnipotent, see that you don't have any failures. Find operas good or bad (for the moment, you understand); it suffices that they attract the crowds. You will say that that is unworthy, inartistic and defiles the altar\*; never mind, you can clean it afterwards. Meanwhile it is necessary to live. If the theatres close, they will never re-open. And if *Don Carlos* doesn't make money, put it aside and put on *Le Roi de Lahore* with all speed. . . ."

Where is the "outraged dignity"?

(5) The "even more bitter" letter to Clarina Maffei is quoted by Mr. Klein in the cut version given by de Rensis in *Franco Faccio e Verdi*, pp. 185-6. The full text (*Copialettere*, footnote to pp. 280-1, and elsewhere) of the passage in question is calm, sensible and even jocular:

"Thanks for the newspaper cuttings that you sent me; cuttings I knew because they were sent me direct from Milan, I don't know by whom. Among them there was one which said some very hard things. It spoke of intrigues, of a clique, etc. I don't know whether there is any truth in this and I don't want to know; but I do know that all this fuss about an opera, all this praise and adulation makes me recall the time (you know the old always praise their own times) when without advertisement, almost without knowing anybody, we presented our faces to the public, and if they applauded us we said, or didn't say, 'Thanks'. If they hissed: 'See you another time'. I don't know if this was beautiful, but it was certainly more dignified. Among those cuttings Corticelli made me read one which gave me a good laugh. That paper proposed to have a tablet made, to be affixed to the Scala: In the year 1879 a foreign composer came here who was greatly fêted, and a banquet was given, attended by the Mayor and Corporation. In 1872 a certain Verdi came in person to produce *Aida* and he was not even offered a

\* A reference to Boito's notorious *Brindisi*.

glass of water.' 'A glass of water indeed!' I then said. 'They almost beat me up.' Don't take this phrase literally; I only mean to say that for *Aida* I had battles of words with everybody, and they all looked at me in surly fashion as though I were a wild beast. I hasten to say that it was my fault, entirely my fault, because to tell the truth I am not very gracious in the theatre—or outside it."

Is this an "outburst"? Is it "somewhat lacking in dignity"? Does it call for that really unforgivable comment of Mr. Klein's: "Sad that the greatest of all triumphs can not render the heart of even a noble artist insensible to the pangs of jealousy."?

(6) "Years later Verdi's attitude to the composer of *Manon*", Mr. Klein goes on, "underwent a slight change. 'I have seen the sweet Massenet', he writes amiably, if in semi-jocular tone, in November, 1894".

The quotation happens to be from a letter of Boito's (*Carteggi Verdiani*, p. 178).

(7) "Above all, he detested Massenet's so-called Biblical works. The thought of John the Baptist making love to Salome was repugnant to him—here again one notices a touch of that austere morality that had prompted him to condemn *Carmen*."

The source of this is Verdi's letter to Arrivabene of 5th January, 1882:

"I don't believe *Hérodiade* is more valuable than *Le Roi de Lahore*. Invention is no more plentiful. Good construction and scenic pomp. There is one obstacle, to my mind, difficult to surmount: a John the Baptist who makes love to Salome. This I can't swallow! But the public is sometimes less particular. We shall see."

Detestation? Repugnance? Does not the passage show rather sound sense, good taste and humour? And does Mr. Klein like the idea of this John the Baptist?

(8) "On the other hand he reveals a strange predilection for Massenet's Austrian rival Karl Goldmark and his sultry *Queen of Sheba*. 'That is the kind of opera we require nowadays', he admiringly remarks."

Mr. Klein here misunderstands Verdi completely. The remark is *ironic*:

"As for *The Queen of Sheba*, I have had news direct, and it really seems that the public is not very warm about it, but it doesn't matter. This is the opera we want in these days. All of us, composers, critics, public, have done our best to renounce our musical nationality. Now we've come to an end; another step and we shall be germanized in this as in so many other things."

Admiration? A strange predilection for Goldmark?

(9) Mr. Klein's first quotation on Boito, on p. 271, is made up of one sentence from the letter to Arrivabene of 30th March, 1879, plus two sentences from the letter to Arrivabene of 21st March, 1877. It is possible to make Verdi say almost anything by this method. In fact, the first passage quoted is as a whole humorous in tone, the other absolutely just and level-headed:

"It is difficult just now to say whether Boito will be able to give Italy any masterpieces. He has much talent, aspires to originality but succeeds only in being strange. He lacks spontaneity and he lacks invention; many musical qualities. With these tendencies one can succeed more or less well in a subject as strange and theatrical as *Mefistofele*, but less easily in *Nerone*."

(10) "It is with bated breath that he speaks of *Nerone*—'the work I dare not name'." "Bated breath" is absurd. Verdi refers delicately to Boito's agonizing struggle for self-expression.

(11) The passage quoted about Puccini's *Le Villi* does not give Verdi's own opinion on that work, which he had not heard. He is telling Arrivabene what he has read about it in a letter from someone else.

(12) Marchetti. "Verdi's enthusiastic appreciation of his feeblest opera, *Don Giovanni d'Austria*, makes us, however, once again wonder at his occasional lack of discernment. To ignore *Carmen* and *La Wally* and praise Marchetti cannot but strike us as singularly obtuse."

Here again Verdi had not heard the opera at all and, in the letter to which reference is made, is merely reporting what he has learned of its success, which he hopes will continue.

(13) *Lohengrin*. "He thought the swan music ugly."

This absurdity occurs also in Francis Toye's biography. Verdi's "Brutto il cigno!" obviously refers to the property swan.

I suggest Mr. Klein has only succeeded in demonstrating his own obtuseness (his favourite word).

Yours faithfully,

FRANK WALKER.

2, Crescent Road,  
Wimbledon, S.W.20.

21st December, 1949.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—In his vitriolic and unfair attack on my article about "Verdi's Attitude to his Contemporaries" Mr. Frank Walker unjustifiably accuses me of "taking words or sentences out of their context and, in almost every case, completely misinterpreting Verdi's meaning". May I suggest that this is precisely what he himself does in the very first paragraph of his letter?

He states that I find in Verdi "a lack of insight, at times bordering on obtuseness", "arrogance", "a definite lack of critical sense", etc. Now whenever, as in certain definite cases, I have been obliged to make any accusations of such a character, I have quoted chapter-and-verse, but at the same time I have made it abundantly clear that fundamentally Verdi was a great and magnanimous figure who frequently "revealed insight and generosity". I refer, for example, to "his habitual calm and detachment", and I state that it was "one of Verdi's noblest characteristics that he so rarely allowed a private grievance to warp his judgment". Moreover, I assert that "Verdi generally revealed himself at his greatest when he had been most savagely or unfairly provoked". Mr. Walker deliberately ignores such statements, as well as numerous others. Even when I hint that "a touch of arrogance occasionally crept into Verdi's judgments", he crudely abbreviates this to the more uncompromising "arrogance". By such methods Mr. Walker succeeds in completely distorting the meaning of my article.

Let me now come to Mr. Walker's thirteen points, though I myself might quite justifiably raise numerous points of my own that—judging from his letter—he would find difficult to answer:

(1) Mr. Walker starts by attempting to batter in an open door. It never occurred to me to deny that Verdi's comments on Berlioz and Gounod were "models of justice and detachment". Nevertheless, Verdi was more genuinely interested in Gounod, pre-eminently an operatic composer, than in Berlioz and certainly considered him "the first master of France", even during the lifetime of Berlioz. I, however, regret a slip regarding the date of a letter from which I quoted, though Mr. Walker chivalrously suggests that I am not even aware of the year in which Berlioz died!

(2) I am very much surprised that Mr. Walker, who himself quotes from the *Carteggi Verdiani*, should have read them so superficially as to ask me for further evidence concerning Verdi's contemptuous attitude towards Bizet. Did not Verdi write to Giulio Ricordi during the rehearsals of *Falstaff*: "The singers must not sing the music of *Falstaff* as they do such ancient comic (farical) operas ("opere buffe antiche") as *Carmen* (!), *Don Pasquale* or even *The Secret Marriage*." Confronted with such evidence, can Mr. Walker any longer deny that Verdi occasionally displayed "a definite lack of critical sense as well as of impartiality"? To rank a recent and fundamentally tragic opera such as *Carmen* with *Don Pasquale* and *The Secret Marriage* is (to quote Mr. Walker's own expression) "unforgivable". Verdi was certainly not so undiscerning as the words suggest—one is almost tempted to believe that irritation at the success of *Carmen* may have prompted him to let slip such an inept remark.

What right has Mr. Walker to dismiss Monaldi's book—despite some inaccuracies—as "fatuous"? Because it contains statements of Verdi's that, by the way, happen to prove that one or two of his own assertions are incorrect? Both Monaldi and Bonavia affirm that Verdi preferred Thomas' charming but essentially mediocre *Mignon* to *Carmen*. Verdi's curious statement: "Non mi piace il tipo di donna che tradisce" ("I do not like the sort of woman who betrays") which I have encountered in various Italian journals, may not be of great importance, yet it is undeniably significant of Verdi's attitude and it appears to me to bear the stamp of authenticity.

Verdi's inexplicable hostility to Bizet is repeatedly demonstrated to anyone who has insight enough to read between the lines. In 1883, at a time when *Carmen* (consult Nietzsche) was scoring its greatest triumphs in Italy and beginning to influence a whole school of composers, Verdi could write to Hiller: "The French produce and produce and reproduce, without ever discovering anything". And to Arrivabene, in December, 1885: "We need sound operas not suffering from either a French or a German disease". (That great Verdi scholar, Franz Werfel, speaks discerningly of Verdi's strange antagonism to *Carmen* in his beautiful novel on the composer of *Otello*.)

(3) Verdi's undoubted interest in Ambroise Thomas ("he adored *Mignon*": Monaldi), one of the least inspired of his famous operatic contemporaries, contrasts forcibly and surely unfavourably with his contemptuous references to Bizet, Catalani, Massenet and even, at times, Boito (all of them much more highly gifted musicians). Mr. Walker's "sane and moderate comment" is, I believe, too laudatory, as he himself would have realized if he had been more familiar with Thomas' tedious swan-song *Francesca*.

(4) and (5). I think these two points must be dealt with together, though Mr. Walker contrives to confuse the issue by separating them and indulging in an unworthy quibble about the date of a letter. Mr. Walker naively imagines that if he can trip me up over some unimportant detail he can invalidate my whole argument. In fact, I had started by making a general statement about Verdi's unfriendly attitude to Massenet before proceeding to substantiate it by references to any particular letters. Mr. Walker, with amazing lack of penetration, denies my assertion that

Verdi "displayed acute resentment at the warm reception accorded to a foreign artist of some distinction". Verdi's bitter (can even Mr. Walker deny that it is bitter?) reference to "all this fuss about an opera, all this praise and adulation" is in itself perhaps enough to prove my statement. But Mr. Walker deliberately breaks off his own quotation from Verdi's biting letter to Faccio just as he is approaching the very sentences that unmistakably reveal that in an essential point he himself is ludicrously in error. Let me therefore conclude his fragmentary citation:

"If my *Don Carlos* does not make money, by all means replace it by *Le Roi de Lahore*, a talented work, of topical interest, not human, but most suitable in this epoch of so-called 'verismo', in which nothing is created that is genuine, an almost fool-proof opera, all the more so as the composer has a sweet disposition, is malleable, and will win the sympathy of everybody. A foreigner! hospitality! the usual artistic banquet! In former times this was unnecessary; now it is indispensable! And, indeed, if I were an impresario, I should beware of engaging an artist who could not induce you to offer him a banquet, who called a spade a spade and who had backbone. How horrible the times are!"

If there is not bitterness and resentment here, what, in the name of truth and common-sense, is there? No doubt Mr. Walker, who, in common with most pedants, is curiously lacking in imagination, would answer "jocularity". However, both Franco Faccio (to whom Verdi was writing) and Faccio's biographer, Raffaello de Rensis, exercised a little more discernment; they both perceived "the outraged dignity" in the passage that Mr. Walker so unwarrantably omits, I am forced to conclude, in order to gain a point at any price. (See Faccio's answer and de Rensis' tart comment.)

Moreover, I object very strongly to Mr. Walker's unfair reference to what he terms my "really unforgivable comment": "Sad that the greatest of all triumphs can not render the heart of even a noble artist insensitive to the pangs of jealousy". No comment was ever more justifiable or more impartial. I did not make such a statement irresponsibly, but "sadly". Verdi was a very complex figure, capable, as I have frequently stated, of rare generosity and exemplary moderation, sometimes in the teeth of savage provocation, but also subject to violent and singularly unjust outbursts.

And now in this connection I myself am obliged to raise a point which I believe you will agree is more important than any of Mr. Walker's. Why did he completely pass over my references to Verdi's harsh treatment of Catalani, to whom in my article I had devoted more space than to any other composer? I believe I can fathom the reason. Because he fully realized that, if he had mentioned Catalani, he would not have had a leg to stand on, as far as his own assertion about my "unforgivable comment" was concerned.

Surely Mr. Walker can not be unaware of the existence of the churlish and ungenerous letters that Verdi wrote about Catalani to Giuseppe Perosio, the music critic of the *Corriere Mercantile* of Genoa (published in *La Stampa della Sera* in June, 1940) with their contemptuous references to the "maestrino lucchese (the little master of Lucca) in whom I am not in the least interested". Catalani, gentle and noble-minded, is denounced as "hard and obstinate". Verdi truculently refuses to see his masterpiece *La Wally*, whilst he hastens to ask for a stall for a performance of a mediocre work by Franchetti. Verdi makes the following comment (without even having heard the work!) about *La Wally*: "The public wants Italian operas and not German counterfeits and travesties. This work will not last, for without heart and inspiration one cannot create vital music!" *La Wally* did last, at any rate in Italy (where for over half a century it has justifiably been popular) and Verdi was mistaken. He, moreover, informed Ricordi that he would lose money by publishing his young rival's opera, but Ricordi—to his eternal credit—"obstinately" (the word is Verdi's) refused to listen to him. And Verdi acted thus at a time when it was generally known that Catalani, poor and unsuccessful, was dying of consumption (Mr. Walker might consult Catalani's staunchest friend, Toscanini).

But the youthful composer, overcoming all bitterness, displayed more magnanimity than Verdi. Though he is stated to have fainted one day as a result of such treatment, he continued to praise Verdi's latest masterpiece to his students, whilst the great composer was stupidly damning his young colleague's "German (!) opera", that ethereal, sensitive *Wally* that is as fundamentally Italian as *Aida* or *Otello*. Lack of space prevents me from quoting more extensively from Verdi's correspondence regarding Catalani; besides, it makes too distressing reading. Even Verdi's greatest admirer must turn away his eyes in sorrow. It seems to me that I have proved my point up to the hilt—and Mr. Walker's only excuse for misrepresenting me as a calumniator of Verdi must be sheer ignorance.

(6) Verdi's attitude to Massenet did towards the end of his life undergo a slight change. Massenet paid him a visit in 1894 and was most courteously received. Both Verdi and Boito were in the habit of referring to Massenet in a slightly contemptuous tone as "the sweet (i.e. the sentimental) Massenet". I regret an oversight that in the circumstances was perhaps understandable.

(7) If Verdi's phrase: "this I can't swallow" does not reveal repugnance, what else can it mean? But then Mr. Walker's mental processes are occasionally extraordinarily difficult to follow. Certainly I myself do not like the idea of John the Baptist making love to Salome. Neither do I like the idea of a great ruler having a child murdered—and yet I admire *Boris*. Surely in the right hands any subject can be impressive. Verdi's attitude to Massenet's *Hérodiade* is, however,

characteristic of "his austere morality", which I neither praise nor censure. Nevertheless, I am convinced that he did occasionally allow such moral preoccupations to influence him unduly in his verdicts on a work of art.

(8) It is absurd for Mr. Walker to regard as "ironical" what Verdi plainly meant to be serious and what generations of Italian critics have justifiably considered a genuine tribute to Goldmark. Mr. Walker fails to realize that, when Verdi states that "all of us have done our best to renounce our musical nationality", he is referring to the *Italian* composers, critics, etc., and of course not to Goldmark, who is held up as a shining example of a musician who has not forsaken the traditions of his race. Verdi *did* cherish "a strange predilection" for Goldmark, as Mr. Walker would have realized, had he troubled to read the great composer's correspondence a little less perfunctorily. In the *Carteggi Verdiani* Verdi refers admiringly to Goldmark and declares that his friend Hiller's music reminds him pleasantly of the work of the composer of *The Queen of Sheba*, "a fact which pleases me in a German, though I deplore it in an Italian". (Consult Monaldi.)

(9) Verdi's contemptuous reference to Boito's greatest musical achievement: the "Prologue in Heaven" of *Mefistofele*—whether humorous in tone or not—is decidedly lacking in insight. Yet I have never denied that Verdi could be absolutely just and level-headed and that he sums up Boito, on the whole, very accurately. Mr. Walker translates a certain passage a trifle casually: "gli manca il motivo" is surely not "he lacks invention", but "he lacks the motif", a point I discussed in my article.

(10) Mr. Walker fails here, I believe, to understand Verdi's attitude to Boito. He was deeply impressed by the younger man's vast culture and erudition, and particularly by the poetic libretto of *Nerone*, which he considered finer and more original than even the masterly works Boito had written for him. He did, in fact, expect something extremely remarkable—and I think that in this case he was more discerning than the numerous critics who have damned *Nerone*.

(11) Verdi may have studied the score of *Le Villi*. Otherwise he would not—or should not—have spoken so dogmatically about it. Boito, indeed, was in the habit of trying to interest him in the works of the younger composers by playing extracts to him. Thus, with admirable perseverance, and despite constant rebuffs, he gradually introduced Verdi to Puccini, Mascagni and even—Catalani. Anyhow Verdi is not merely "telling Arrivabene what he has read" about *Le Villi* (as Mr. Walker maintains). He is quite simply laying down the law!

(12) Mr. Walker's remark is beside the point. I am well aware that Verdi was constantly in the habit of praising or censuring works he had never even heard. The fact remains that he did praise Marchetti inordinately (chiefly for non-artistic reasons) whilst he referred disparagingly and contemptuously to two much greater composers: Bizet and Catalani. This Mr. Walker is unable to refute.

(13) With regard to the *Lohengrin* swan, I must, I am afraid, refer Mr. Walker to the *Verdi* biography of Mr. Toye, who is after all the greatest English authority on Verdi. He writes: "The author was fortunate enough himself to look at these notes (on Verdi's score of *Lohengrin*) which are often scarcely legible. Some are profoundly interesting. For instance, Verdi found all the Swan music ugly".

Surely Mr. Toye, who has himself closely examined these almost illegible notes, has a claim to be regarded as a competent judge. At any rate, it appears to me that Verdi was obviously not attracted by much of the Swan music, though he seems to have approved of the end of the bird's entrance. I must confess that it strikes me as a trifle strange to write about a property swan on a score!

But away with such trivialities into which Mr. Walker has inveigled me against my will. With regard to petty details he may be a Sherlock Holmes, but in all essential matters he is little better than a Watson. By such methods how can one get at the truth about a composer? At any rate, Mr. Walker's main accusation that I have misrepresented Verdi falls absolutely flat. Yet he himself has not hesitated in a recent article in *Music and Letters* (January, 1949) to dwell at inordinate length on some very unpleasant aspects of Verdi's character. The great composer is depicted in pages of ill-natured gossip as both a boor and a miser, with, it seems to me, a minimum of evidence either to confirm or refute such distasteful charges.

On the other hand, I referred sparingly and leniently to Verdi's harsh and uncharitable treatment of Catalani, the most pathetic and unfortunate, as well as one of the most highly gifted of his contemporaries, because I felt that Verdi himself had repented of his conduct. He was one of those rare men who would have had the courage to pronounce their own verdict: "What a disgrace!" And perhaps when the aged composer played—as he frequently did—that exquisite aria: "Ebben? Neandrò lontana", he felt that in some mysterious manner he was making amends to the spirit of one whom during his brief sojourn on earth he had so cruelly misjudged and belittled. Indeed, when the eagerly awaited, definitive biography of Verdi appears, it will, I believe, reveal a figure almost as imperious and as complex as that of Wagner himself, a figure no doubt fearless and essentially noble, but with curious, unaccountable streaks of pettiness and of prejudice.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN W. KLEIN.



19, Rudall Crescent,  
Hampstead, N.W.3.  
11th December, 1949.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MOZART MELODY

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—May I add a footnote to Mr. Barna's interesting article "The Development of a Mozart Melody"? This melody is found in four other works by Mozart, *viz.* the Concerto for three pianofortes (K.242, 1776), the pianoforte Sonata in G (K.283, 1774), and the pianoforte concertos in B flat (K.450, 1784), and F major (K.459, 1784). The date of the last two works fills a gap in Mr. Barna's sequence.

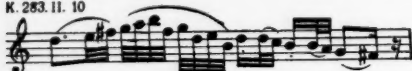
Yours faithfully,

A. HYATT KING.

Concerto for 3 Pianofortes  
K. 242. I. 74, 75



Sonata in G  
K. 283. II. 10



Concerto for Pianoforte in B flat  
K. 450. I. 33-35



Concerto for Pianoforte in F  
K. 459. III. 154-156

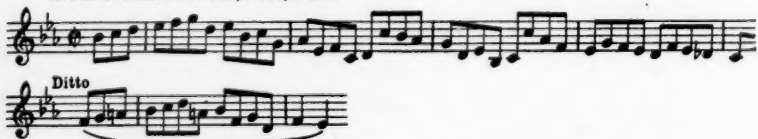


30, Herne Hill,  
London, S.E.24.  
10th December, 1949.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—"Here", says Mr. Barna upon discussing K.309 of 1777, "I must break off my argument, as Mozart himself broke off for thirteen or fourteen years" (MR, Nov., 1949, p. 253). He did not:

K. 449 (finished Feb 9th, 1784), finale



[For Mr. Keller's second example, see the quotation from K.450 which accompanies Mr. Hyatt King's letter (Ed.).]

We are not, then, "perfectly justified in treating this intervening period as a complete break. . . ." (*loc. cit.*); Mr. Barna will have to revise his thesis. Let me add that the present examples must be considered in their formal and contrapuntal context. It is important to observe how often in Mozart an idea that has appeared in a previous work is based on, evolves from, or varies an idea that has not. Mr. Barna's theory should also make allowance for an important occurrence of the melody (in B flat!) in the 2nd movement (tenor aria) of the *Litaniae de Venerabili Altaris Sacramento*, K.243, of 1776 (!).

Apropos of K.575's opening, Mr. Barna speaks of the "second, 'feminine' half of a characteristically Mozartean ambivalent sonata theme" (p. 250). The concept of (psychic) ambivalence was introduced by Freud to denote simultaneous love and hate towards the same object. In the interest of scientific psychology, including the psychological branch of musicology, it is desirable that the term should retain its exact meaning.

Yours faithfully,

HANS KELLER.



114, Priory Gardens,  
London, N.6.

11th December, 1949.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE MODERN ARTIST—AND CRITIC

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—While I fully agree with Mr. Keller's diagnostical findings in his article "Kyla Greenbaum and the Psychology of the Modern Artist", I feel that the panacea of "Trusting Your Spontaneous Musicality" which he offers as a cure to our conscience-stricken performers is oversimplified and needs specification, attempted below.

(1) In our age, for the first time in the history of music, the concert repertoire in use ranges back over 250 years of non-scholastic, *i.e.* highly individual and diversified composition. If Mr. Keller deplores this state of affairs, he might blame the "Zeitgeist" for it, but not the individual performer. Of the modern pianist playing Mozart, he cannot, in fairness, ask the degree of intuitive empathy inborn to an equally musical Austrian pianist of 1790. Applying, vice versa, the standards of 1790 to our time of centrifugally dispersing styles, we may expect to find one, or a few players only, to be in complete emotional accord with any one modern composer; perhaps none at all, since most modern composers are emotionally in advance of us. Therefore, if Mr. Keller's arguments were applied rigidly, 99 per cent. of our performers would have to give up performing.

(2) But we cannot go back to 1790. So we have to bridge the gap by tradition and teaching. Mr. Keller is quite right about the common misuses of these in the hands of "anxious" teachers and students (as running from one teacher to another, or studying "authentic" interpretations from gramophone records). The ideal would of course be to have the live tradition inculcated in the young player at such an early date that he might have lost all conscious recollection of his studies by the time he steps on the platform. But this is easier said than done, and by just telling a young performer to shake off his or her inhibitions, impressions, anxiety and guilt-feelings, nothing will be gained—we shall have to wait and see how he or she is going to shape, since we cannot psycho-analyse that particular performer, plus the rest of the musical profession, plus our politicians, to boot.

(3) Now to Mr. Keller's views about "over-practising" and "over-conscientious analysis of details". In the special case of Mozart's piano works, more technical practice is needed than in 1790, since our pianos are about twice as heavy.

(4) Speaking in general, a greater amount of, and also more kinds of technique, are required from our executants, for reasons adduced in (1). I grant that this brings the danger of "playing the passage without a jolt, . . . and so playing it away" very near to many. But again, even if a performer would follow Mr. Keller's advice and practise less technique, this would only increase his guilt-feelings and his nervousness (see point (2)). Therefore, I believe, Mr. Keller ought to compromise with the illusions of his "patients" by telling them that there is no end to the good that detailed practising can do them if (a) they survey the whole from time to time, (b) they try to forget their self-coaching a few days before the performance.

(5) This theory of mine, which optimistically combines the reproductive art of Furtwängler and Toscanini, can be expounded in the following way: Every note of a composition could, in theory, be defined by the performer as to (a) pitch, (b) length, (c) volume, (d) tone-colour. Now, it is clear that even the most fussy practiser cannot possibly "nail down" every note as to those four properties. So there will always be a margin of about 95 per cent. left to spontaneous improvisation. It may be, of course, that the player's spontaneity, which as we see now is *unavoidable*, is at fault *in itself*. But then again, we should have to change his entire personality, not his practising habits. On the other hand, a strong and healthy musicality will look into the details of a score as an astronomer looks into stellar space through a powerful telescope: the nearest objects will be temporarily magnified out of recognition, while unsuspected constellations will loom up beyond them.

And Miss Greenbaum? Well might she paraphrase verse 31, chapter x, of the Letter *To the Hebrews*, thus: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living critic".

Yours faithfully,

PAUL HAMBURGER.

[Hans Keller replies:] I offered no panacea, but a general diagnosis and a particular advice to Greenbaum and her like. *Ad (1)*: It is not only *modern* composers that are in advance of their time, whence I do not ask for 1790's empathy, but for more. That wellnigh all performances of good modern stuff are bound to be inadequate has nothing to do with my thesis. *Ad (2)*: My argument has therapeutic value where the inhibited forces are so powerful and moralizable that a re-orientation of conscience on the conscious level would make them stronger than the inhibitions. Such (as I have said in less-syllabic words) seemed to me to be the case with Greenbaum. *Ad (3)*: True; does not affect my conclusions. *Ad (4)* (Increase of guilt upon decrease of

practice): Not necessarily. Guilt can be shifted on to other spheres charged or chargeable with superego energy, where they even might come in useful. Or they might be shifted within the musical sphere, making for more activity through less practice. And even where such displacements are psychologically impossible, the increase of conscious guilt and nervousness about not having practised "enough" will (in the case of a musical and not too neurotic personality) be the smaller of alternative evils. Besides, however many guilts you have in store for the hard hours of leisure, once you have moralized spontaneous musicality you will feel guilty too if you do not obey it. The ensuing conflict may transport you to Harley Street, but as a musician I welcome it. *Ad (5)*: The most important determinants of an artistic whole are as "definable" as life. Yet many try their hand at the homunculus until the whole has the wholeness of a corpse. It is a fearful thing for a living critic to fall into the clutches of a dead performance that could be alive.

17, Church Street,  
Durham.

10th October, 1949.

#### MORLEY'S "INTRODUCTION"

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

SIR,—I am preparing for publication (Dent & Sons) a modernized and annotated edition of Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction*, at the end of which occurs a list of "Authors" whom Morley has consulted. Some of the names in this list are not to be found in any of the standard works of reference, and of others I can find but scanty information. I should be very grateful, therefore, if any of your readers could either give me more details concerning those individuals indicated in the accompanying list or else suggest where I might search myself.

Yours faithfully,

R. A. HARMAN.

#### Late Writers

Incertus Impressus Basiliae.  
Coregiensis (Manfredus Barbarinus).

#### Foreign Composers

Craen (Nicholas)—fifteenth-sixteenth century. Dodec and other colls.  
Sylvanus (Andreas)—first half sixteenth century.  
Antonius a Vineae.  
Tzamen (Thomas)—first half sixteenth century.  
Jacques du Pont.  
Luyr (Adam)—sixteenth century.  
Locatello (Jean Baptiste)—mid sixteenth century.  
Hurtuer.  
Rinaldo del Mel.  
Meyer (Gregorius)—early sixteenth cent. Dodec.  
Ingelini (*Angelini*) (Orazio)—second half sixteenth century.

#### English Composers

Orwell (Robert)—contemporary of Dunstable.  
Wilkinson (Robert)—fifteenth-sixteenth century.  
(Thomas)—thirteenth century.  
Davis (Robert)—second half fifteenth century.  
Risby—first half sixteenth century.  
Grig (Morgan).  
Sturton (Edmund)—fifteenth-sixteenth century.  
Jacket.  
Corbrand.  
Testwood (Robert)—sixteenth century.  
Ungle.  
Beech.  
Hodges.  
Selby (*Shelbye*) (William)—first half sixteenth century. B.M. Mulliner.  
Ocland (Christopher). B.M.  
Newton (Dr.).  
Thorne—fifteenth-sixteenth century.  
Averie—mid sixteenth century.

#### Names in Text but not in List

Jacobus de Navernia.  
Lengenbrunner (Johann)—mid sixteenth century.

B.M. = works in British Museum.

Dodec = examples in Glareanus' *Dodecachordon*.

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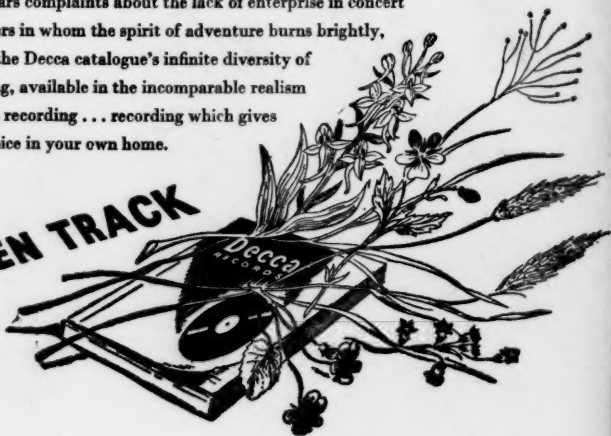
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